

Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban



INTRODUCTION

BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF J.K. ROWLING

Rowling's father was an aircraft engineer and her mother was a science technician. She was the first of two children and has said that she was a very unhappy teen: her mother suffered from multiple sclerosis and her relationship with her father was strained. She graduated from the University of Exeter in 1986 and then worked as a researcher and a secretary in London. She conceived of the first Harry Potter book in 1990 and began to write immediately. Rowling's mother died in December of that year, and Rowling channeled much of her grief into the novel. Over the next few years, Rowling married, had her first daughter, divorced, and signed up for welfare benefits. She finished *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* in 1995 and after its publication in 1997, Rowling began her rise to fame. The proceeds from the U.S. auction for the publishing rights allowed Rowling to buy a flat in Edinburgh and over the next ten years, Rowling wrote and published the next six books in the series. She also remarried in 2001 and had two more children. In 2004 she became the first billionaire to make her fortune writing books, though her donations to charity mean that she's since lost her billionaire status. She published several crime novels under the pen name Robert Galbraith and has written the screenplays for the films in the Fantastic Beasts franchise.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

On J.K. Rowling's fan site Pottermore, she's stated that Lupin's werewolfism is a metaphor for "illnesses that carry a stigma," especially those like HIV/AIDS. Lupin faces prejudice and discrimination in similar ways to those that HIV-positive people have experienced since the AIDS epidemic began in the 1980s; countries around the world enforce laws governing HIV-positive people's abilities to cross borders, receive healthcare, or keep jobs. However, in the years preceding the novel's release, the FDA approved the first protease inhibitor (a type of antiviral drug), released the first home testing kit, and approved a combination retroviral drug, all of which improved quality of life and increased life expectancy for HIV-positive people. The Wolfsbane Potion, which Lupin explains is a relatively recent invention, mirrors these medical gains.

RELATED LITERARY WORKS

In addition to the original seven novels in the Harry Potter series, Rowling has written several other works that fit into the same world. These include the supplemental text *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them*, a book on Harry's first-year

booklist, as well as the stage play *The Cursed Child*, which sees Harry's son also experiment with time travel and the consequences of changing time. Rowling's work is often compared with that of J.R.R. Tolkien ([The Hobbit](#); [The Lord of the Rings](#)) and of C.S. Lewis ([The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe](#) and the rest of the Chronicles of Narnia series). Rowling has cited the work of Jane Austen (and the novel [Emma](#) in particular) as a major influence on her own writing, as well as the work of author and activist Jessica Mitford (*Hons and Rebels*).

KEY FACTS

- **Full Title:** Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban
- **When Written:** 1998
- **Where Written:** Edinburgh, Scotland
- **When Published:** 1999
- **Literary Period:** Contemporary
- **Genre:** Young Adult Fiction; Fantasy
- **Setting:** Hogwarts
- **Climax:** Harry conjures his Patronus, saving himself, Hermione, and Sirius
- **Antagonist:** Sirius Black appears to be the antagonist for much of the novel. When it becomes clear he's not, the antagonist becomes Peter Pettigrew and the justice system more broadly.
- **Point of View:** Third-person limited

EXTRA CREDIT

Rats and Cats and Owls, Oh My! For the film adaptation of *Prisoner of Azkaban*, many of the animals (aside from Sirius's dog form) were played by real animal actors. Hedwig was played by a single owl; Crookshanks by two cats; and Scabbers by four live rats and one animatronic one.

Giving Back. Rowling's experience as an extremely poor single parent has greatly informed her charitable giving since making her fortune with Harry Potter. She's donated to Gingerbread and Comic Relief, and established the Volant Charitable Trust in 2000, all of which help children and low-income families. Rowling has also been vocal about preserving the British welfare system and remaining in the country as a taxpayer, given that she owes her current success to the help she once received.



PLOT SUMMARY

Harry Potter is trying to do his summer homework on medieval [witch hunts](#), but he has to do it at night in secret in case his aunt and uncle, Petunia and Vernon Dursley, wake up. Harry realizes that it's after midnight--it's now his birthday. He looks out his window and sees three owls flying towards him. They carry gifts from his friends Ron, Hermione, and Hagrid. He also receives a permission form to visit Hogsmeade while at school, to be signed by a guardian. The next day, Harry sees a convict named Sirius Black on the news and learns that Aunt Marge is coming to visit. She's horrible to Harry. Harry gets through her visit by reminding himself of the deal that he made with Vernon: Vernon will sign the Hogsmeade form if Harry behaves. On Marge's last night, Harry loses his temper, inflates Marge like a balloon, and leaves the house. He sees a huge black dog and accidentally summons the Knight Bus. Stan, an employee on the bus, explains that Sirius Black escaped from the wizard prison Azkaban, where he was imprisoned for killing thirteen people with a single curse. When the bus drops Harry off at the Leaky Cauldron, Cornelius Fudge, the Minister of Magic, meets him and doesn't expel Harry for doing magic in front of muggles.

Harry spends the next three weeks staying in the Leaky Cauldron and wandering Diagon Alley. He finally meets Hermione and Ron on the last day of summer vacation and accompanies them to a magical creature shop so that Hermione can buy an owl and Ron can get medicine for Scabbers. However, a huge orange cat named Crookshanks tries to eat Scabbers in the shop and Hermione buys the beast. After dinner, Harry overhears Mr. Weasley and Mrs. Weasley saying that Sirius Black wants to kill him. Harry tells Ron and Hermione on the train the next day, in a compartment with only the new Defense Against the Dark Arts teacher, Professor Lupin, sleeping in it. After a few hours, the train stops and people come on board. The "people" are [dementors](#) and as one opens the door to Harry's compartment, he faints and hears a woman screaming. Lupin sends the dementor away and distributes chocolate. McGonagall calls Harry and Hermione to her office so Harry can receive chocolate, but he has no idea what she tells Hermione.

Hermione's schedule looks strange, as she has multiple classes scheduled for the same time. They have Divination first, which is taught by Professor Trelawney. She predicts that Harry will die and sees the Grim, a death omen, in Harry's tealeaves. After lunch the trio has Care of Magical Creatures, which Hagrid teaches. He introduces the Gryffindor and Slytherin students to hippogriffs. Malfoy insults a hippogriff named Buckbeak, and Buckbeak strikes Malfoy. In Potions later that week, Malfoy arrives late and plays up his injuries. The Gryffindors have Defense Against the Dark Arts next with Lupin. Lupin conducts a practical lesson on how to fight boggarts, which are shape-

shifters that imitate each person's worst fear. Lupin stops the lesson before Harry can have a turn.

A few weeks later, Quidditch practice starts and the school announces the first Hogsmeade weekend. As Harry, Ron, and Hermione discuss Hogsmeade, Crookshanks makes a leap to eat Scabbers. While Ron and Hermione are in Hogsmeade the next day, Harry wanders the halls. Lupin finds him and invites him to have tea. He admits that he didn't let Harry fight the boggart because he didn't want Voldemort to appear and scare everyone. Snape enters to give Lupin a suspicious smoking goblet. As everyone heads upstairs after the feast, they discover that Sirius Black tried to break into Gryffindor Tower and destroyed the Fat Lady's portrait. Dumbledore sends all students to sleep in the Great Hall and appoints a painting of a knight named Sir Cadogan to guard the Gryffindor portrait hole. Harry is late to Defense Against the Dark Arts the next day and discovers Snape standing in for Lupin. Snape teaches the class about werewolves.

The first Quidditch match is the next day. Rather than playing Slytherin, Gryffindor plays Hufflepuff. The weather is horrendous and Harry has an awful time: he sees the black dog again and as he chases the Snitch, dementors swarm the field and he passes out. He wakes up in the hospital wing and the team tells him that he fell off his broom and Hufflepuff won. Hermione explains that the Whomping Willow destroyed his broom. After Lupin's class later that week, Lupin tells Harry that he's so affected by the dementors because his past is especially dark, and Harry admits that he hears Lily screaming when he sees them. Harry asks if Lupin can teach him to fight dementors, and Lupin agrees.

The next Hogsmeade trip is scheduled for the Saturday before Christmas. After Harry says goodbye to Ron and Hermione, Fred and George pull Harry aside and give him the Marauder's Map, which shows everyone in Hogwarts as well as secret passages out of the castle. In the Three Broomsticks, Harry inadvertently learns that Sirius Black betrayed his parents and is his godfather. Harry is filled with rage and the next day, admits he wants revenge. He goes to Hagrid to confront him about his silence, but the trio learns that Buckbeak's case will go on to the Committee for the Disposal of Dangerous Creatures, which is in Lucius Malfoy's pocket.

On Christmas, Harry receives the newest racing broom, a Firebolt, with no note. Crookshanks makes another attempt at Scabbers's life and after Christmas dinner, Hermione tells McGonagall about the Firebolt. McGonagall confiscates the broom to check it for jinxes and Hermione says she believes the broom came from Sirius Black. Furious, Harry and Ron ignore Hermione for days and Harry has his first private lesson with Lupin. They work with a boggart, since it will turn into a dementor. Harry tries to conjure a Patronus charm to defeat it but fails. This continues for a month without improvement, though things start to get better when McGonagall gives Harry

the Firebolt back. Minutes after Harry and Ron decide to make up with Hermione, Ron discovers blood on his sheets: he believes Crookshanks ate Scabbers. Harry suspects it's the end of Ron and Hermione's friendship.

During the next Quidditch match, Gryffindor beats Ravenclaw and Harry conjures a Patronus when three dementors take the field--but the dementors are actually Malfoy and his cronies in disguise. Minutes after Harry goes to sleep that night, Ron's scream jerks him awake: Ron woke up to Sirius Black with a knife. Sir Cadogan confirms that he let Black into the common room. The next day, Harry and Ron receive an invitation to have tea with Hagrid, who encourages them to forgive Hermione. When the boys get back to the common room, they see that there will be another Hogsmeade trip the coming weekend. Harry agrees to go with the Invisibility Cloak. He's briefly held up by Snape on the morning of the trip, but he manages to find Ron in Hogsmeade. However, as the two visit the Shrieking Shack and Harry throws mud at Malfoy, the Cloak slips and Malfoy sees Harry's face. Snape tries to punish Harry immediately upon Harry's return, but Lupin covers for Harry and confiscates the Marauder's Map. Hermione meets Harry and Ron on their way back to the common room with a note from Hagrid: he lost Buckbeak's trial. Hermione acts strangely the next few days; she slaps Malfoy, "forgets" to go to Charms, and walks out of Divination.

A week later, after the dirtiest Quidditch game Harry has ever played, Gryffindor beats Slytherin and wins the Quidditch Cup. The trio learns that Buckbeak's final appeal will be at Hogwarts on the last day of their exams. Exam time arrives. Divination is the strangest for Harry, as during his private exam, Trelawney makes a prediction that Voldemort's servant will return to Voldemort. That evening, Hagrid writes to say that Buckbeak lost his appeal. Harry, Ron, and Hermione sneak down to Hagrid's hut under the Invisibility Cloak. Hermione discovers Scabbers in a milk jug and Hagrid shoos them all out before the execution party arrives. Halfway back to the castle, they hear the axe fall and Scabbers escapes. Ron catches Scabbers under the Whomping Willow, but a big black dog grabs Ron and drags him into the tree's roots. Crookshanks stops the tree so that Harry and Hermione can follow. They follow a tunnel until they reach the inside of the Shrieking Shack, where they discover Sirius Black with Ron.

Filled with rage, Harry tries to fight Black. They hear someone downstairs, Hermione screams for help, and Lupin races up the stairs. He embraces Black, which makes Hermione shriek that he's a werewolf. Lupin affirms this and then says things that don't make sense: he saw on the Marauder's Map that Harry, Ron, Hermione, and a fourth person entered the Whomping Willow. That fourth person is an Animagus named Peter Pettigrew, who can turn into a rat and has been living for twelve years as Scabbers. Lupin and Black explain that Black, Pettigrew, and James Potter became Animagi as students to

keep Lupin company during his transformations into a werewolf. Snape suddenly appears, but Harry, Ron, and Hermione knock him out. Lupin and Black force Scabbers to transform and he becomes the man Peter Pettigrew. Black explains that Pettigrew betrayed Harry's parents and framed Black. Harry believes Black's story, and the group makes its way back through the tunnel so they can turn in Pettigrew. Harry accepts Black's invitation to come live with him but out in the moonlight, Lupin transforms into a werewolf and Pettigrew escapes. Harry and Hermione find Black by the lake and the dementors swarm around them. A real Patronus chases the dementors away.

Harry and Hermione wake up in the hospital wing to the sound of Fudge and Snape talking about Black. They try to tell Snape and Dumbledore the truth, but Dumbledore sends everyone away and tells Hermione that they need more time. Hermione uses a necklace to take Harry back in time three hours. She explains that this is how she's been getting to her classes all year. They realize that Dumbledore wants them to save Buckbeak too and Harry steals him from under the executioner's nose. Harry admits to Hermione that he saw James conjure the Patronus. After Lupin turns into a werewolf, Harry, Hermione, and Buckbeak hide in Hagrid's hut. Harry sneaks out, hoping to see his father, but realizes that *he* is actually the one to conjure the Patronus. It's a massive stag. Minutes later, he and Hermione fly Buckbeak to the appropriate window, find Black, and send him away with Buckbeak. They make it back to the hospital wing just in time, though Snape is furious that Black got away.

The next day, Harry learns that Lupin resigned after Snape let slip that he's a werewolf. Harry goes to say goodbye and learns that his father's Animagus form was a stag. Dumbledore arrives to say goodbye to Lupin and after Lupin leaves, Dumbledore insists that the trip back in time was a success. Harry feels morose until halfway home, when a small owl brings him a letter from Black. It includes a note giving Harry permission to visit Hogsmeade and says that Ron can keep the owl.



CHARACTERS

MAJOR CHARACTERS

Harry Potter – The protagonist of the novel; a thirteen-year-old wizard who attends Hogwarts School for Witchcraft and Wizardry. He lives with his Aunt Petunia and Uncle Vernon during the summer. Because the Dursleys are muggles and hate magic, Harry's summers are horrendous. When Vernon's sister Marge visits, Harry loses his temper because she insults his parents. He inadvertently does magic and is surprised when he doesn't get expelled for his transgression, but he discovers that this is because the escaped criminal Sirius Black is on the loose and wants to kill him. Third-years at Hogwarts get to take

elective classes and Harry chooses to take Care of Magical Creatures, where he does his best to make Hagrid's lessons successes, and Divination, which proves trying. Harry sees a hulking dog when he first runs away from the Dursleys and Professor Trelawney makes Harry concerned when she continually sees the Grim, a dog-shaped death omen, in his tealeaves and crystal ball. He finds himself caught between Ron and Hermione for much of the school year, as Hermione's cat Crookshanks makes constant attempts at the life of Ron's rat, Scabbers. Harry himself struggles to forgive Hermione when she tells McGonagall about the mysterious Firebolt broomstick he receives for Christmas, which results in the broom being confiscated. To add to Harry's misery, his horrific experiences as a baby mean that the **dementors** that guard the school affect him more than other students and he hears Lily screaming whenever they're close to him. Fortunately, Harry forms a close relationship with the new Defense Against the Dark Arts teacher, Lupin, and Lupin works with him to learn the Patronus Charm. Right before Christmas Harry discovers that Sirius Black betrayed his parents to Voldemort, knowledge that fills him with rage. After a tense conversation in the Shrieking Shack with Black, Lupin, Harry, and Ron, Harry finally learns the truth: Black didn't betray his parents, Peter Pettigrew did and then framed Black. Harry spares Pettigrew's life but must go back in time to save Sirius from the dementors. During this trip back, Harry also conjures his first truly effective Patronus.

Ron Weasley – Harry's best friend at Hogwarts. Ron's family is extremely poor and, because they're all wizards, Ron knows little about muggles and how to use muggle technology. This results in his botched telephone conversation with Uncle Vernon, during which he yells into the phone. Though Ron has previously acted unimpressed with his pet rat, Scabbers, he becomes very protective of his rat when Hermione adopts a cat, Crookshanks, who does his best to catch Scabbers. This means that Ron is often at odds with Hermione, and he spends much of the novel not speaking to her. However, they also fight for a variety of other reasons, including Hermione's dislike for copying homework (which Ron and Harry do often) and Ron's sense of utter betrayal when Hermione reports Harry's Firebolt to McGonagall. When they are speaking, Ron often gives Hermione a hard time about all the classes she's taking, which he does in part because he's an unmotivated student. While he shares Harry and Hermione's distaste for Divination, his childhood in the wizarding world means that he takes Trelawney's Grim sightings and Harry's having seen the black dog very seriously, as one of his uncles died after seeing a Grim. Despite the supposed danger posed to Harry by Sirius Black, Ron fully supports Harry's sneaking into Hogsmeade with the use of the Marauder's Map. Ron proves himself especially loyal and heroic as the school year draws to a close. After making up with Hermione, he takes on the bulk of the research for Buckbeak's trial, and when the black dog tries to drag Ron and Scabbers into the Whomping Willow, Ron tries so hard to resist

that his leg breaks. He doesn't believe Lupin and Sirius Black at first that Scabbers is Peter Pettigrew but when he sees that they're right, Ron takes the loss of his pet as a personal betrayal. His broken leg means that he's unable to accompany Harry and Hermione back in time.

Hermione Granger – Harry and Ron's best friend at Hogwarts. She's muggle-born and is the smartest student in their year. Though she's always loved school and learning, Hermione takes this a step further in her third year when Professor McGonagall arranges for Hermione to receive a Time-Turner, a device that allows her to do hours over so she can take multiple classes at the same time. Because of this, Hermione spends most of the school year worried, stressed, and busy, as she has more homework than anyone else. Though this makes her snappy and irritable, Ron's behavior makes things even worse: Hermione's new cat, Crookshanks, seems to have it out for Scabbers, Ron's rat. Hermione insists that because Crookshanks is a cat, it's understandable that he wants to chase rats. They spend much of the year not talking to each other because of this, and Harry also ignores Hermione after she tells Professor McGonagall about the Firebolt he receives for Christmas. She chooses to tell McGonagall about the broomstick because she cares deeply for Harry's safety, and she also takes rules very seriously. Hermione loves all of her classes except for Divination. She refers to it as "woolly" and scoffs at Trelawney's predictions, as she believes they're silly and obvious. Around Easter, she drops the class. When Snape substitutes for Lupin and assigns an essay on werewolves, Hermione is the only student to complete it. In doing so, she does exactly what Snape intended and discovers that Lupin is a werewolf, though she keeps this to herself until she, Harry, Ron, and Sirius Black end up in the Shrieking Shack with him. She asks a number of insightful questions in the shack that Harry takes as proof of how seriously she takes her studies. At the end of their ordeal, Dumbledore sends Hermione and Harry back in time to free Buckbeak and Sirius, and Hermione's love of rules means that she's fanatical about making sure Harry adheres to all the rules of time travel. This is her last trip back in time, however; she chooses to drop Muggle Studies so she can have a normal class schedule.

Professor Lupin – Harry, Ron, and Hermione first meet Professor Lupin on the Hogwarts Express. He's the new Defense Against the Dark Arts teacher and though he's not very old, he's going gray, appears somewhat ill, and wears very shabby robes. However, he soon impresses the Gryffindor students when **dementors** search the train and he repels them and distributes chocolate, which is an antidote. This makes it clear to students and staff alike that Lupin is a competent teacher. During his lessons he makes sure to encourage less confident students like Neville, while also rewarding Hermione for her vast knowledge. Harry notices several strange things, however, including that Snape appears to loathe Lupin and that

Lupin is regularly ill. Lupin begins to take on the role of a mentor to Harry when Harry asks for help in learning to fight dementors. Harry's trust in Lupin grows quickly, especially when Lupin tells Harry the truth about why he does certain things and when he covers for Harry when he's caught in Hogsmeade with the Marauder's Map. During one of Lupin's illnesses, Snape substitutes for his class and assigns an essay on werewolves. Hermione is the only one to complete it and to realize that Lupin is a werewolf. In the Shrieking Shack, Lupin finally shares that Dumbledore allowed him to come to Hogwarts as a student and built the Shrieking Shack so that he had a safe place to transform. Lupin was friends with James, Sirius, and Peter Pettigrew, and the three turned themselves into Animagi so they could keep Lupin company during his transformation. Their adventures around the school gave them the information to write the Marauder's Map. Though Lupin admits that his friends' sacrifice made his transformations bearable, he also recognizes that they were naïve and selfish and didn't fully consider what could've gone wrong. Snape's hatred of Lupin means that, after Black escapes, Snape takes his frustrations out on Lupin by letting slip that he's a werewolf. As werewolves are shunned in wizarding society, Lupin is forced to resign. However, he gives Harry back the Marauder's Map that he previously confiscated before he leaves.

Sirius Black – Harry first hears about Black on the muggle news, where they say that he's an escaped convict. Once Harry reenters the magical world, he learns that Sirius Black was one of Voldemort's closest supporters. He killed thirteen people with a single curse, one of whom was one of his best friends, Peter Pettigrew. After spending twelve years in the wizard prison Azkaban for this crime, Black escapes and is supposedly intent on killing Harry. The photos of Black that Harry sees make Harry think of vampires; he's sallow and thin, with long stringy hair. Right before Christmas, Harry learns that there's more to the story: Black was James Potter's best friend, is Harry's godfather, and, according to most wizards, is the one who gave Lily and James's whereabouts to Voldemort. This knowledge fills Harry with hatred and he realizes he'd like to kill Black since he's the reason Harry is an orphan. When Black sneaks into the castle, he does appear violent--he attacks the Fat Lady's painting and scares Ron by standing over him with a knife--but his actions also make little sense. Ron points out that Black could've easily killed every boy in the dormitory and deems it lucky that Black's first break-in happened during the Halloween feast, when nobody was in the common room for Black to kill. However, these strange actions take on new meaning when Ron, Harry, and Hermione end up in the Shrieking Shack with Black and Lupin. They learn that Black is an Animagus who can turn into a big, black dog and is actually after Peter Pettigrew, not Harry. Pettigrew is the one who betrayed the Potters and framed Black before going into hiding as a rat. Harry refuses to let Sirius kill Pettigrew, as he doesn't believe James would've wanted his friend to become a killer.

This plan is foiled when Pettigrew escapes, but Harry and Hermione's trip back in time saves Sirius from the Dementor's Kiss. Though Sirius must stay in hiding, he does write a note for Dumbledore authorizing Harry to visit Hogsmeade.

Professor Snape – The potions master and the head of Slytherin House. It's a well-known fact among the student body that Snape desperately wants the Defense Against the Dark Arts job and that Dumbledore refuses to give it to him. Snape has never liked any Gryffindor students and hates Harry in particular, as he still holds a grudge against Harry's father, James, for a joke James played on him when they were at school together. This means that during Potions lessons, Snape openly favors Slytherin students while tormenting Gryffindor students. Neville Longbottom is a favorite target, as Neville is afraid of Snape more than anything else. Snape tries to poison Neville's toad in their first lesson and becomes even crueler after he learns that Neville's boggart, which took his form, was forced into the clothes that Neville's grandmother wears. Harry, Ron, and Hermione fear that Snape is trying to poison Professor Lupin, as Harry sees Snape bring Lupin a smoking potion one afternoon. Harry also notices that Snape looks at Lupin with the same kind of loathing he exhibits when he looks at Harry. In the Shrieking Shack, Snape's hatred for Harry, Lupin, and James comes to the forefront: Snape screams at Hermione and refuses to listen to Lupin and Sirius Black's story, as he's too intent on capturing Black and being able to take credit for his capture as well as get revenge for his schoolboy grudge. Harry also learns that Snape is aware that Lupin is a werewolf and has been making him the Wolfsbane Potion, a relatively new and extremely complicated potion. Snape is so enraged when he discovers Black's escape that he "accidentally" lets it slip that Lupin is a werewolf, thereby forcing Lupin to resign before parents begin to insist that Dumbledore fire him.

Scabbers/Peter Pettigrew – Scabbers is Ron's rat, but later in the book it is revealed that he is really the wizard Peter Pettigrew who has taken a rat form. The Weasley family adopted Scabbers (the rat) thirteen years ago; he used to belong to Percy but was passed down to Ron when Percy got an owl. Ron begins to notice Scabbers's health declining in the weeks before Hermione adopts her cat Crookshanks, who is intent on catching Scabbers. This continues for months until Ron discovers blood on his sheets and assumes that Scabbers is dead. However, Hermione finds Scabbers hiding in Hagrid's hut months later. After Harry, Ron, and Hermione end up in the Shrieking Shack with Lupin and Sirius Black, they learn the truth about Scabbers's true identity: the rat is actually the animal form of the wizard Peter Pettigrew. As a boy Pettigrew was friends with James, Lupin, and Sirius. He wasn't very smart but managed to become an Animagus as a fifth year. During Voldemort's rise to power, however, he aligned himself with Voldemort but remained a double agent. Sirius insists that this

is very in character for Pettigrew, who always wanted to align himself with whomever had the most power and would be able to protect him. After being made the Secret Keeper for the Potters, Pettigrew shared their location with Voldemort, which resulted in their death. Days later, he framed Black, the Potters' first Secret Keeper, by yelling that Black killed Lily and James, blowing up a street and killing twelve muggles, and cutting off his finger before turning into a rat and going into hiding. Black then went to Azkaban for Pettigrew's crimes. Harry finds Pettigrew revolting and pathetic. Pettigrew simpers, pleads for mercy, and insists that there was no reason to stand up to Voldemort when he started to come to power. Harry stops Lupin and Black from killing Pettigrew, though this results in Pettigrew's escape.

Rubeus Hagrid – The Hogwarts groundskeeper. He's almost twice the size of a normal man and as a third-year Hogwarts student, he was expelled from school for a crime he didn't commit. Because Harry and Ron were able to clear his name last year, Hagrid is promoted to the Care of Magical Creatures professor this year. Hagrid himself is thrilled at this turn of events, though his thoughts on animals make his curriculum trying for his students: he assigns a textbook that bites, and Harry, Ron, and Hermione know that Hagrid's idea of which animals are cute or cuddly is skewed (in previous years he befriended giant spiders and adopted a baby dragon). His first lesson concerns hippogriffs and though the lesson starts out well, a hippogriff named Buckbeak hurts Malfoy when Malfoy doesn't follow directions. This damages Hagrid's confidence and the class spends most of the rest of the year learning to care for flobberworms, boring creatures that don't need much attention. Despite this lack of confidence, Hagrid is extremely protective of Harry and insists that the trio not break rules to come visit him like they've made a habit of doing in years past. Hermione spends a lot of time with Hagrid as she helps him prepare for Buckbeak's trials, which go poorly for Hagrid--in addition to being a poor public speaker to begin with, the system is rigged and, as he tells the trio, the Committee for the Disposal of Dangerous Creatures "has it in for interesting creatures." However, Hermione's visits do prompt Hagrid to sit Harry and Ron down to talk to them about how they treat her and to suggest that friends should matter more than objects or pets.

Professor Trelawney – The Hogwarts Divination professor. Harry describes her as looking like a "glittering insect," as she wears lots of jewelry and drapes herself in scarves. An eccentric woman, most people at Hogwarts don't take her (or Divination, for that matter) seriously and believe that she's a fraud. Hermione is the most vocal in this regard and, in the spring, walks out of Trelawney's class. Lavender and Parvati, however, take Trelawney very seriously and note that all the predictions she makes come true--Trelawney predicts that a member of the class will leave around Easter, and Lavender

sees her rabbit's untimely death as a manifestation of one of Trelawney's other predictions. Harry finds her classes trying primarily because Trelawney predicts his death during their first class, constantly sees the death omen the Grim when she reads Harry's fortune, and starts sniffing whenever she sees him. This leads him to agree with Hermione until the day of Harry's final Divination exam, when Trelawney makes what Dumbledore believes was a real prediction. Trelawney predicts that Voldemort's servant will rejoin him later that evening, though she seems to be in a trance while she does so and doesn't remember making the prediction when Harry asks her about it when she returns to normal.

Albus Dumbledore – The headmaster at Hogwarts. He's an old wizard and is supposedly the only wizard that Voldemort ever feared. Harry admires Dumbledore greatly and feels safe with him at school; he reasons that Dumbledore will be able to keep him safe from Sirius Black. However, Harry, Ron, and Hermione do question Dumbledore's judgment when it comes to hiring, given that they suspect Professor Snape of trying to poison Professor Lupin. In the Shrieking Shack, however, Lupin shares that Dumbledore has been generous to him for many years: he allowed Lupin to attend Hogwarts as a child and made sure that he had a safe place to transform into a werewolf, and as an adult, Dumbledore was willing to hire Lupin when most wizards are afraid of him. Dumbledore is very willing to change his beliefs depending on what he hears; he believes Sirius's story of innocence after Sirius is captured. He also believes in justice and helping it along whenever he can. For this reason he sends Harry and Hermione back in time to save Sirius and Buckbeak, as he recognizes that it's impossible to save them otherwise.

James Potter – Harry's father. Voldemort murdered him and his wife, Lily, twelve years ago. He attended Hogwarts and was friends with Lupin, Sirius Black, and Peter Pettigrew, and he and Sirius were the smartest students in their year. Harry looks just like James and people believe he inherited his Quidditch ability from him, as James was also a skilled Seeker. Though Harry holds an idealized vision of his father in his head, Snape suggests that James wasn't as purely good as Harry would like to think. Snape insists that James was a bully and was selfish, and he believed himself to be above the rules. Harry learns in the Shrieking Shack that some of this is true: James and his friends managed to turn themselves into Animagi in their fifth year so they could keep Lupin company during his monthly transformations into a werewolf, and what they learned about Hogwarts resulted in the Marauder's Map. James transformed into a stag; his nickname was Prongs.

Cornelius Fudge – The Minister of Magic. When Harry meets him after running away from the Dursleys, he finds Fudge to be a very different person than he was expecting: Fudge acts fatherly towards Harry and seems concerned only for Harry's safety. He tries to brush off the discrepancies Harry notices between how he was treated the year before and how he's

treated this summer when he breaks the law forbidding underage magic, but Fudge refuses to level with Harry or tell him the truth. Though Fudge, like most other wizards, dislikes the [dementors](#), he sees them as a necessary part of his job and authorizes them to use the Dementor's Kiss on Sirius Black if they find him. When Harry tries to tell Fudge what he discovered about Sirius and clear his name, Fudge is unwilling to listen and remains convinced that his version of events is correct.

Draco Malfoy – Harry's archenemy at Hogwarts. Malfoy is a Slytherin student in the same year as Harry. He comes from a wealthy family that used to support Voldemort while Voldemort was in power, and his father, Lucius Malfoy, continues to enjoy power at the Ministry of Magic despite his past. Malfoy is self-important and does whatever he can to annoy or taunt Harry, Ron, and Hermione, and delights when the trio gets in trouble. Malfoy demonstrates his maliciousness most when, after ignoring Hagrid's instructions and insulting the hippogriff Buckbeak, Buckbeak strikes him. Malfoy plays up his injuries and is vocally supportive of the ensuing trial with the Committee for the Disposal of Dangerous Creatures, which his father controls. He also uses his "injuries" to manipulate Quidditch games, and he takes every opportunity to torment Harry about the [dementors](#).

Neville Longbottom – One of Harry's fellow third-year Gryffindors. Neville lives with his grandmother and struggles at school. Though he's very kind, his lack of confidence means that he often messes up when he tries to perform spells. His fear of Professor Snape in particular means that Potions is his worst subject; Snape doesn't help Neville at all and actively terrorizes him during classes. Neville suffers even more derision and ridicule after Professor McGonagall learns that Neville wrote down all of Sir Cadogan's passwords, as the paper somehow ends up in Sirius Black's hands. Though he's punished at the time for losing the paper and putting students at risk, Harry, Ron, and Hermione learn in the Shrieking Shack that Crookshanks stole the paper from the dormitory and it wasn't Neville's fault.

Voldemort – The villain of the series; an evil overlord obsessed with blood purity. He doesn't appear in person in this novel, but he was in power until twelve years ago. At that point, Harry's parents, who were part of the resistance, had gone into hiding from him, but someone close to them betrayed them. Voldemort killed Lily and James, but when he tried to kill Harry, the curse rebounded, destroying him instead. At the beginning of the novel, Harry and the rest of the wizarding world believe that Sirius Black was one of Voldemort's closest supporters and betrayed the Potters, but in the Shrieking Shack, Harry discovers that Sirius is innocent and Peter Pettigrew was actually in league with Voldemort.

Professor McGonagall – The Gryffindor Head of House and the Transfiguration professor at Hogwarts. She's an exacting

teacher and authority figure, though she also cares deeply for her students and their wellbeing. She acts as a voice of reason for Harry early in the school year, as she shares with her class that Professor Trelawney predicts every year that a student will die and nobody has died yet. Later in the year, Harry becomes very angry with her, as she confiscates his Firebolt broomstick to test it for jinxes. Harry discovers at the end of the school year that McGonagall wrote the letters to get Hermione a Time-Turner so that she could take a double course load. McGonagall is also an Animagus and can turn into a cat with markings around the eyes that mimic the glasses she wears in her human form.

Crookshanks – A huge and ugly orange cat that Hermione adopts instead of an owl. He immediately gets on Ron's bad side by trying to attack Scabbers in the magical creatures shop, and he spends the rest of the year attempting to follow through on this first attempt. Though Harry and Ron resent Crookshanks for this, Harry begins to suspect that there's more to Crookshanks when he sees the cat outside with the hulking black dog Harry initially believes is the Grim. In the Shrieking Shack, Sirius Black--the black dog--explains that Crookshanks is the smartest cat he's ever met and seems to know that Scabbers isn't actually a normal rat. Crookshanks helps Sirius throughout the novel and even steals Neville's list of Gryffindor Tower passwords for him.

Buckbeak – A hippogriff (a creature that's half-eagle, half-horse) who features prominently in Hagrid's first Care of Magical Creatures lesson. Hippogriffs in general are proud creatures who will strike if insulted, and Buckbeak is no exception: when Malfoy insults Buckbeak, Buckbeak hurts Malfoy's arm. This results in a string of trials and appeals with the Committee for the Disposal of Dangerous Creatures. During this time Buckbeak lives primarily in Hagrid's hut, where he makes a mess eating small bloody creatures. He loses his final appeal and is sentenced to death, but Harry and Hermione rescue him by taking a trip back in time. Buckbeak then goes into hiding with Sirius Black.

Uncle Vernon – Harry's uncle; a large, often purple, and always angry man. He adores his son, Dudley, and loathes Harry. He and his wife, Petunia, took in Harry after Harry was orphaned and they abused Harry in the hope that doing so would get rid of his magical powers. During the summer before Harry's third year at Hogwarts, Vernon shuts Harry's school supplies away and forbids to send notes to his friends. When his sister, Aunt Marge, comes to visit, Vernon tells her that Harry is attending a school for "incurably criminal boys" and agrees to sign Harry's Hogsmeade permission form if he behaves and plays along. He doesn't follow through as Harry loses his temper and accidentally inflates Marge like a balloon.

Aunt Marge – Uncle Vernon's sister. Like him she's large, purple, and mean, and she takes special pleasure in tormenting Harry. She lives in the country and breeds bulldogs, and her

expertise in dog breeding gives her lots of "evidence" for the mean things she says to Harry. She insists that people are like dogs and that both of Harry's parents were defective; therefore, it's no wonder Harry is such a disappointment. When Harry finally reaches the end of his rope and loses his temper, he inadvertently blows Aunt Marge up like a balloon. After Harry leaves the Dursleys' house, The Ministry of Magic fixes Marge and wipes her memory.

Percy Weasley – The oldest Weasley child still at Hogwarts; he's a seventh-year and is Head Boy. Percy takes himself and his role very seriously, so he often behaves pompously and occasionally abuses his power by yelling at "misbehaving" students. He loves rules and has no time for the nonsense and mischief that Fred and George love, which the twins take as an invitation to torment Percy whenever possible. Though the rest of his siblings get tired of Percy's self-importance, Mrs. Weasley is extremely proud of him.

Mr. Weasley – Ron's father. Mr. Weasley works at the Ministry of Magic, where he works with muggle artifacts. His interest in muggle items is a personal one as well. After Sirius Black's escape from Azkaban, Mr. Weasley and other Ministry employees are asked to handle the search effort. Despite Mrs. Weasley's desire to keep Harry in the dark about their belief that Black is after Harry, Mr. Weasley decides that Harry isn't a child and is old enough to know the truth.

Mrs. Weasley – Ron's mother; a plump, red-haired witch. She's extremely proud of her sons who do well in school, like Bill and Percy, and seems exasperated by Fred, George, and Ron's lack of desire to follow in their brothers' footsteps. She also treats Harry like a son and tries to convince Mr. Weasley to not tell Harry anything about Sirius Black.

Fred Weasley – One of the Weasley twins. As the fourth and fifth Weasley children, Fred and George spend much of their time getting into trouble and teasing people, especially Mrs. Weasley and Percy. When Fred and George were first-years they stole the Marauder's Map from Filch's office, and this year, they pass the map on to Harry.

George Weasley – One of the Weasley twins. Fred and George are the fourth and fifth Weasley children and as their three older brothers are well-behaved and successful, the twins take it upon themselves to get into as much trouble as possible. They're consummate jokesters and torment Percy especially. They give Harry the Marauder's Map, which they stole from Filch's office, so that he can visit Hogsmeade without a permission form. Fred and George also play Quidditch as Beaters.

Oliver Wood – The captain and Keeper of the Gryffindor Quidditch team. A seventh-year, Wood has spent the last several years putting together a skilled and competent team and he desperately wants to win the Quidditch Cup during his final year at Hogwarts. He's obsessive about practicing and

about Quidditch theory; he often finds Harry in the hallways and talks strategy to him. He's known for being overenthusiastic and intense, which makes him a prime target for Fred and George's good-natured teasing.

Cedric Diggory – A tall and handsome fifth-year in Hufflepuff; he's the new Quidditch captain and Seeker on their team. Girls find him charming, while Fred Weasley insists that Diggory isn't very smart. He does prove himself extremely honorable during the Quidditch match with Gryffindor: when he catches the Snitch while the [dementors](#) attack Harry, he pushes for a rematch and tries to forfeit Hufflepuff's win.

Filch – The cantankerous caretaker at Hogwarts. He has a cat, Mrs. Norris, who helps him patrol the corridors. He doesn't like students, suspects them all of mischief, and is a fan of horrific corporal punishment that in the novel's present is illegal. Fred and George share with Harry that Filch has a drawer full of potentially dangerous confiscated items, from which they stole the Marauder's Map in their first year.

Lucius Malfoy – Draco Malfoy's father. A powerful, wealthy, and influential wizard who was once in league with Voldemort, he exercises his power in the present by registering a complaint against Buckbeak with the Committee for the Disposal of Dangerous Creatures, which he has a great deal of power over. He influences the committee to sentence Buckbeak to death.

Sir Cadogan – A knight in one of the Hogwarts paintings. After Sirius Black attacks the Fat Lady, he takes over for her and guards the Gryffindor portrait hole. The Gryffindors don't like him as his passwords are complicated and change constantly. Dumbledore fires him after he lets Sirius Black into the Gryffindor common room with a list of passwords.

Aunt Petunia – Harry's aunt and Lily's sister. A muggle, Petunia is terrified of magic and participated fully in Vernon's project of bullying Harry. She's horse-faced and extremely nosy; her favorite pastime is spying on the neighbors. When she hears about the hotline for Sirius Black on the news, Harry knows that calling the hotline would be her proudest moment.

Lily Potter – Harry's mother; adults who knew her tell Harry often that he has Lily's eyes. Voldemort murdered her twelve years ago but because she sacrificed her life for Harry's, Harry was protected and survived the ordeal. When [dementors](#) get close to Harry, he hears Lily screaming and pleading with Voldemort in her last minutes.

Stan Shunpike – The young man who manages passengers on the Knight Bus. Harry notes that though Stan tries to be professional, he's actually very young. He buys Harry's lie that Harry is actually Neville Longbottom and tells Harry about what Sirius Black supposedly did twelve years ago to end up in Azkaban.

MINOR CHARACTERS

Neville's Grandmother – An imposing and demanding older lady. Though Neville seems afraid of her, he does find her clothing humorous--when he fights the boggart, he forces the boggart version of Professor Snape into his grandmother's clothes, complete with a moth-eaten bird hat.

Dudley – Harry's non-magical cousin. He's greedy, overweight, and loves nothing more than watching his parents bully Harry. He receives a new television at the beginning of the summer so he doesn't have to walk back and forth between the kitchen and the living room.

The Fat Lady – A large lady in a pink dress whose portrait guards the Gryffindor portrait hole. She takes her job very seriously and refuses to let Sirius Black into the tower without the password.

Parvati Patil – One of Harry's classmates. Along with her best friend, Lavender Brown, she admires Professor Trelawney and takes their Divination classes very seriously.

Vincent Crabbe – One of Draco Malfoy's cronies. Along with Goyle, Crabbe does whatever Malfoy asks him to do and doesn't seem very intelligent.

Gregory Goyle – One of Draco Malfoy's henchmen. He's large and gorilla-like and, in Harry's estimation, exists only to do Malfoy's bidding.

Madam Pomfrey – The Hogwarts nurse. She's skilled at mending all manner of injuries, and she's impressed when she learns that Professor Lupin knows his antidotes.

Lavender Brown – One of Harry's classmates. She loves Divination classes and admires Professor Trelawney.

Peeves – The Hogwarts poltergeist. He thrives on mischief and mayhem and though he torments students and teachers alike, he's never rude to Professor Dumbledore.

Hedwig – Harry's snowy owl. She's extremely intelligent and has an uncanny knack for knowing when and where to show up so that she can carry messages to Harry.

Madam Rosmerta – The owner and bartender at The Three Broomsticks, the local bar in Hogsmeade.

Cho Chang – A pretty fourth-year Ravenclaw who plays Seeker on their Quidditch team.

Lee Jordan – One of Fred and George's friends; he provides Quidditch commentary during matches.

Ginny Weasley – The youngest Weasley child and the only girl. She has a crush on Harry.

Seamus Finnigan – One of Harry's classmates; a third-year Gryffindor student.

Dean Thomas – One of Harry's fellow third-year Gryffindors.

Tom – The wizened owner of the London/Diagon Alley pub the Leaky Cauldron.

Penelope Clearwater – Percy Weasley's girlfriend, a seventh-

year in Ravenclaw.

Bill Weasley – The eldest Weasley son. He works in banking in Egypt.

Alicia Spinnet – A Chaser on the Gryffindor Quidditch team.

Angelina Johnson – A Chaser on the Gryffindor Quidditch team.

Katie Bell – A Chaser on the Gryffindor Quidditch team.

Professor Sprout – The Herbology professor.

Colin Creevy – A second-year Gryffindor student who idolizes Harry.

Madam Hooch – The Hogwarts flying instructor. She also referees Quidditch games.

Macnair – The executioner who is supposed to execute Buckbeak.

Ernie Prang – The driver of the Knight Bus. He's old and an erratic driver.

Professor Flitwick – The Charms professor.

Pansy Parkinson – A mean girl in Slytherin.

Errol – The Weasley family's old owl.

Fang – Hagrid's boarhound.

Trevor – Neville's pet toad.

Ripper – Aunt Marge's bad-tempered old bulldog.



THEMES

In LitCharts literature guides, each theme gets its own color-coded icon. These icons make it easy to track where the themes occur most prominently throughout the work. If you don't have a color printer, you can still use the icons to track themes in black and white.



JUSTICE

For Harry and his friends' third year at Hogwarts, their challenge shifts from fighting incarnations of the dark lord Voldemort to instead taking on Sirius Black, a man who's believed by the entire wizarding world to have been Voldemort's right-hand man. After spending twelve years in the wizard prison Azkaban, where he was serving a life sentence for brutally murdering twelve innocent muggles and his best friend, Peter Pettigrew, Black escapes in the months before the school year begins, supposedly so that he can find and kill Harry. Though Black's crime and his imprisonment in Azkaban take center stage, it's by no means the trio's only engagement with the wizarding justice system. By offering the reader and Harry multiple ways to engage with the system, the novel is able to offer a more complete picture of how it functions. Most importantly, Harry's experiences with justice in

Prisoner of Azkaban suggest that the wizarding justice system isn't actually just at all--instead, it's corrupt and more concerned with making a show of punishing supposed criminals than with administering fair trials, uncovering actual criminals, or offering a reliable system that doles out predictable and sensible punishments for crimes.

Until Harry learns the truth in the Shrieking Shack, the events surrounding Black's imprisonment appear to make for a simple open and shut case. Twelve years ago, Black supposedly betrayed Lily and James Potter by revealing their whereabouts to Voldemort, which led to their deaths. Then, in an event that makes Black seem even more maniacal, days later he murdered twelve innocent muggles as well as one of his best friends, Peter Pettigrew. For these crimes, he was given a life sentence in Azkaban. During the time that these events are treated as facts, it appears as though Black got what he deserved. This sets up Harry's initial understanding of the wizarding justice system, at least when it comes to hardened criminals like Black, as reasonably fair and just: Harry is led to believe that if a person murders innocent people and cooperates with Voldemort, they will naturally receive punishment from a government that's positioned as being on the side of good.

Though Harry doesn't question anything in regards to Black until the end of the novel, it's worth noting that this perception of justice doesn't square with his personal dealings with magical law enforcement. When the house elf Dobby used magic in the Dursleys' house in Harry's second year, Harry was blamed and threatened with expulsion if he used magic outside of school again--yet, when Harry uses magic both accidentally and on purpose during Aunt Marge's visit, Cornelius Fudge, the Minister of Magic, laughs it off and insists that Harry has nothing to worry about. This then becomes Harry's first indication that the wizarding justice system isn't something he can rely on to treat accused individuals fairly or with impartiality--for whatever reason, Harry is too valuable to punish in his third year when he wasn't a year before. It's also telling that there's no indication that Black ever went on trial for his crimes; he was sent to Azkaban immediately. In other words, he never got the chance to convince anyone of his own innocence--something that, in a more functional system, might have given him a chance at freedom.

Because Harry's emotions and his personal stakes in his own brushes with the law color his ability to ask difficult questions about how the justice system works (see Storytelling and Perspective theme), the only way he's able to see that the wizarding justice system isn't actually just is when it attempts to wrongfully convict the hippogriff Buckbeak. After Buckbeak hurts Draco Malfoy during a lesson (in retaliation for something that Malfoy was told explicitly not to do), Lucius Malfoy registers a complaint against the hippogriff with the Committee for the Disposal of Dangerous Creatures, which results in a string of trials and appeals. Harry, Hermione, and

Ron all know that what happened to Malfoy wasn't Buckbeak's fault--Hagrid told his class outright that hippogriffs are proud creatures and will behave violently if insulted--so they initially throw themselves into helping Hagrid build his case to prove Buckbeak's innocence to the Committee. After the first trial, however, Harry and the trio learn that the Committee isn't as impartial as they'd like to think it is: Lucius Malfoy has power over the Committee, which means the Committee is far more interested in pleasing Mr. Malfoy than it is in dealing with facts in Buckbeak's case. This results in them sentencing Buckbeak to death, despite evidence, witness testimony, and legal precedent that all suggest the hippogriff is being wrongfully punished for a natural and known quality of his species, not because he did anything wrong.

Especially once it comes to light that Sirius Black isn't actually guilty--Peter Pettigrew betrayed the Potters, faked his own death, and framed Sirius in the process--all of this suggests that the wizarding justice system is more concerned with creating a show of justice than it is with actually finding out the truth. This is supported most poignantly by what Hagrid tells Harry about the [dementors](#), the non-human guards of Azkaban: the dementors don't care at all about who's guilty and who's innocent; they care only about having bodies, souls, and happiness around to feed on. They will attack and suck the soul out of anybody, from true criminals to innocent children. The dementors then come to symbolize the entire system of justice as espoused by the Ministry of Magic, which proves itself willing to punish or threaten anyone if given the chance.

Harry's choice to believe Sirius's version of events suggests that after his dealings with these aspects of wizarding law enforcement and the court system, he's developed a healthy suspicion of its ability to actually uphold law and order, conduct fair and unbiased trials, or even consider the possibility that seemingly simple court cases might be more complex than they appear at first glance. Instead, Harry comes away with the sense that justice in his world can only happen when individuals listen and try to learn the entire story of a given case--and in the cases of Sirius and Buckbeak, justice can only be served when individuals take matters into their own hands, rather than relying on a system that favors performances designed to create the illusion of government.



STORYTELLING AND PERSPECTIVE

Because Harry is still a child during his third year at Hogwarts, many of the adults around him do their best to mediate the information that he receives about the escaped criminal Sirius Black. Some adults, like Mrs. Weasley, don't want Harry to know at all that Black is supposedly after him; most others settle for telling Harry that Black is after him, but leave out other crucial elements of the story to try to manipulate Harry's feelings in the name of keeping him safe. As Harry slowly acquires information about

Sirius Black and eventually comes to realize that Sirius isn't the evil murderer that most people believe him to be, *Prisoner of Azkaban* asks piercing questions about the power of storytelling and how individuals' perspectives and histories alter how they interact with the truth. Ultimately, the novel proposes that whoever has the power to tell their story--regardless of how truthful it is--then has the power to dictate reality on a larger scale.

At the beginning of the novel, Harry has less information about Sirius Black than anyone else. He first hears about Black on the muggle news and, given Harry's isolation from the wizarding world, he doesn't realize that Black is a wizard and escaped from Azkaban until he leaves the Dursleys to rejoin his community in Diagon Alley. Though relatively benign, the way that the wizarding and muggle governments portray Sirius Black to their citizens illustrates clearly how providing or leaving out information influences how a person processes the story as a whole. Uncle Vernon refers to Sirius just as a "filthy layabout," a descriptor that represents how little Uncle Vernon knows about Black. To the wizarding world, which is aware of the crimes he supposedly committed, Black is more than dirty and unattractive--he's considered the most dangerous prisoner in Azkaban, and one of Voldemort's most valuable servants.

For much of the novel, Harry uses the version of events that Mr. Weasley gives him (that Black killed thirteen people with a single curse and has been saying in his sleep that "he's at Hogwarts," leading everyone to believe he's after Harry) as fact and as the whole story. However, when Harry discovers that Black was actually his parents' Secret Keeper (the only person who knew Lily and James's location) and outed them to Voldemort, he learns another important lesson about perspective and storytelling: emotions, especially negative ones, make it much easier for stories like this to take hold. The fact that every adult in Harry's life kept this part of the story secret from him suggests that they are all well aware of this fact and were acting in Harry's best interests. They know that Harry has a habit of getting into dangerous trouble and fear--correctly--that were Harry to know this version of the truth, he'd willingly put himself in danger in order to catch Black himself.

At the novel's climax in the Shrieking Shack, Harry finally learns the truth of what happened twelve years ago. Black didn't actually give up Harry's parents on purpose; he believed that Peter Pettigrew would be a less likely target for Voldemort and so encouraged the Potters to make him their Secret Keeper. Unbeknownst to all of them, Pettigrew actually was working with Voldemort. Pettigrew was then the person who blew up a muggle street, killing twelve muggles, framing Black, and faking his own death by turning into his rat form. This revelation plays with ideas of perspective and storytelling in several ways. First, it suggests that Pettigrew was a skilled manipulator and knew how the wizarding world would interpret things when he blew

up the street and disappeared. Given the high emotions at the time, the wizarding community's desire to look as though they were putting Death Eaters behind bars, and the fact that Pettigrew's "death" effectively discredited the truth if it came from Black's mouth, the version of events that Pettigrew crafted became the story accepted by the masses.

Though Harry, Ron, Hermione, and Lupin accept Black's version of events, Snape--who is knocked out cold while Black explains what happened, and therefore doesn't hear the story--refuses to do so. For him, the longtime resentment he harbors towards Lupin and Black is enough to make him unwilling to believe this new spin on what happened, while the fact that he also never sees Pettigrew in his human form means he never gets proof that Black is telling the truth. Once they all know the truth, previous events also take on new meanings. It becomes clear that Black's mutterings in Azkaban were about Pettigrew, not Harry, and most importantly for Harry, he realizes that he hasn't really been seeing the death omen the Grim all year--the big black dog was actually Black.

For Harry, Ron, and Hermione, these revelations allow them to shift their thinking and engage with the world with a more critical eye. Sirius's story in particular is one more shred of important evidence that impresses upon them that their government is fundamentally untrustworthy and willing to take the easy way out when it comes to criminal justice. Harry's happiness at discovering that Sirius is his godfather suggests even more clearly that there's much to gain from knowing the whole story. Though it shows everyone who believes the new version of events who their true enemy is (something that becomes extremely important in the later novels), for Harry personally, knowing the truth of what happened means that for the first time in his life, he gains someone kind and caring to call family.



TEACHING

Professor Lupin, the new Defense Against the Dark Arts teacher, is the first Defense Against the Dark Arts teacher in Harry's experience to demonstrate knowledge and mastery of the subject, as well as the first to take on the role of mentor for any of his students. While his predecessors were either ineffective frauds or seemed terrified of the subject, Lupin presents his students with lessons that follow a logical progression through age-appropriate material and, at the end of the school year, leave them well-prepared to take on any of the nefarious creatures they learned about. Through Lupin, then, the novel is able to explore what makes a good teacher, especially by comparing him with Professor Snape, the potions master who's known for playing favorites and terrorizing students he doesn't like. With this, the novel suggests that what sets good teachers apart from middling or bad teachers is a genuine interest in students as people and the ability to instill confidence in their pupils.

Lupin earns the respect of Gryffindor students before they even arrive at Hogwarts. When [dementors](#) board the Hogwarts Express to search the train, Lupin doesn't allow them to terrorize the students in his car and after they leave, he distributes chocolate (an antidote to the dementors). This is an indicator that he not only knows what he's doing and knows how to deal with dementors, it shows that he also believes it's his responsibility to care for the students' health and wellbeing. Even more importantly, Lupin demonstrates during the third-year Gryffindors' first lesson with him that he's aware of his students' quirks and social standings, as he uses what he knows to tailor the lesson to their needs. This is why he asks Neville to assist him with the boggart at first--he knows that Neville isn't at all confident in his abilities, but also knows that if given encouragement, Neville is capable of succeeding. Then, by not allowing Harry to face the boggart to prevent an incarnation of Voldemort frightening everyone in the classroom, he also demonstrates the ability to plan lessons that won't completely terrify his students. For Harry's conception of Lupin as a competent and caring teacher solidifies even more when Lupin, confronted with Harry's question of why he wasn't allowed to take on the boggart, doesn't deny that he purposefully denied Harry the chance. This impresses upon Harry that though Lupin is an adult and an authority figure, he also recognizes that his students are people who are just as deserving of having their questions answered truthfully as anyone else.

If Lupin is construed as the living embodiment of good teaching, Snape represents the exact opposite. Potions lessons are dismal and anxiety-inducing affairs for anyone who isn't a Slytherin student, especially if Snape already dislikes them. During his classes, Snape regularly exhibits unethical behavior. He tries to poison Neville's toad, Trevor, in their first Potions lesson, exhibits blatant favoritism that affects students' grades, and verbally abuses the students when they either fail to properly concoct his potions or, as with Hermione, offend him by demonstrating mastery and understanding of the subject while also being a member of a House he doesn't like. Though this all explains why none of the Gryffindors do particularly well in Potions classes, Snape's teaching methods also call into question whether or not his favored Slytherins do well because they actually understand the material or if they succeed just because they're favorites. Even though the Slytherins are considered "bad guys" throughout the series, that doesn't mean they're exempt from Hogwarts's entire mission: to prepare students for adult life in the wizarding world, something that, presumably, requires a working knowledge of potion-making.

The differences between Lupin and Snape's teaching styles become most apparent in the Shrieking Shack. The high emotional tenor of the situation means that Snape lets his emotions and biases get the better of him, and he screams at Hermione several times throughout the evening. Lupin, on the

other hand, treats Hermione and Harry's questions as valid and worthwhile, and he does nothing without asking the students' permission and consent. Taken together, Lupin's behavior towards Harry, Ron, and Hermione means that they're able to feel a sense of involvement and ownership over the information they learn in the Shrieking Shack, in much the same way that Lupin encourages them to think about their lessons in school. Snape's behavior, however, makes it clear that he doesn't value students as people: the trio, students he's supposed to be in charge of protecting and nurturing, are nothing more than an obstacle standing between him and revenge for a childhood grudge, as well as the promised honor of the Order of Merlin for catching Sirius Black.

In many ways, what Harry, Ron, and Hermione learn about teaching during their third year at Hogwarts serves to shape their ideas about teaching in the future and, in particular, deepens their hatred and distrust of Snape. Lupin's example provides Harry the framework to later go on to teach his classmates lessons of his own design, while Lupin himself remains a mentor to the trio throughout the series. However, this does offer insight into the power of teachers on a much broader scale: while a good teacher can have lasting positive effects on former students for years to come, teachers who don't treat their students fairly not only damage students' self-esteem, but they also fail to prepare them for life in the real world by making it so students leave school without the tools or knowledge they need to succeed.



RESPONSIBILITY, MORALITY, AND TIME

Simply by introducing the element of time travel, *Prisoner of Azkaban* naturally raises questions about time travel that many stories do--namely, what the rules of time travel are and when or if "changing time" is ever appropriate. By comparing the novel's two uses of time travel, the first being Hermione's using it to take a double course load and the second being Hermione and Harry's trip back in time to save Sirius and Buckbeak, the novel suggests that while time travel is a tool that can be used for many reasons, it's best employed for purposes that seek to right moral wrongs rather than for an individual's personal gain.

Unbeknownst to everyone except Professor McGonagall and Hermione herself, McGonagall arranges for Hermione to receive a Time-Turner (a small hourglass necklace) from the Ministry of Magic at the start of the year. With the Time-Turner, Hermione has the ability to take a nearly double course load by going back in time one hour to take two classes at the same time. For Hermione, this feeds her desire to learn as much as possible in a very important way--she's able to effectively learn twice as much as her classmates. However, as the school year progresses and particularly as exams approach, Harry and Ron begin to notice that Hermione's time traveling is taking a toll on her. Though they don't know *how* Hermione is

making it to all of her simultaneous classes, they do recognize that she's tired, snappy, and more on edge than usual. She also spends all of her free time studying and has very little time or energy for anything else. Hermione's exhaustion and her compromised mental health suggest that there are consequences to time travel in the way she's using it. At the end of the year, she even admits this outright--messing with time this way isn't worth it for her.

Hermione and Harry also use the Time-Turner, at Dumbledore's suggestion, to save both Buckbeak and Sirius Black from their unjust sentences. By encouraging them to use time travel in this way, Dumbledore suggests that time travel does have a place: in this case, it's being used to save innocent lives and right wrongs that cannot be fixed without time travel (or through the wizarding world's corrupt justice system, as in the Justice theme). As this is Harry's first time using the Time-Turner, however, Hermione introduces him to the fact that there are rules governing time travel: most importantly, that a person time traveling cannot be seen by their past or future self, as plenty of time travelers have killed themselves unwittingly by doing so. Harry and Hermione also realize that they're bound by Dumbledore's rules--that is, they need to do only what he asked them to do and no more. For both of these reasons, Harry isn't able to stop Snape from complicating things in the Shrieking Shack or capture Peter Pettigrew after he escapes, actions that would fundamentally change what he knew happened at the moment in which he went back in time.

During his trip back in time, Harry does discover that there can be exceptions to these rules--though he realizes that those exceptions can only look like exceptions from the time traveler's perspective during their time travel itself. This is why Harry realizes he can conjure the Patronus by the lake, thereby saving himself, Hermione, and Sirius--he knows that the version of him on the lake believes he saw James Potter, not himself, and so technically speaking, Harry isn't breaking the rules.

Though as far as the reader knows, all the characters' trips back in time are legal and follow established rules of time travel, Hermione's realization that the toll of constantly traveling back and forth through time for her own gain isn't worth it says a lot about the way that the novel ascribes morality to the different uses of time travel. In Hermione's case, she was the only one who stood to gain from her time travel; it was a fundamentally selfish endeavor. Her trip with Harry to save Sirius and Buckbeak, however, was for a much nobler purpose, as it sought to free innocent victims from death and imprisonment. In this way, the novel suggests that while time travel may be available to individuals for their own personal gain, it's far more meaningful when people use it to right wrongs and improve society as a whole.



FRIENDSHIP AND GROWING UP

Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban introduces the reader to two generations of friendships: those between Harry and his friends in the present day,

and those between Harry's father, James, and James's crew while they were students at Hogwarts. By exploring the contours of the different friendship generations and how the friendships evolve over time, the book positions how a person treats their friends as an indicator of maturity and selflessness—or as an indicator of a lack thereof.

For much of the novel, Hermione finds herself at odds with Ron and Harry. Ron is understandably angry when Hermione chooses to adopt Crookshanks, an orange cat intent on murdering his rat, Scabbers, while both boys are beside themselves when Hermione tells Professor McGonagall about the Firebolt broom that Harry receives mysteriously at Christmas. For Hermione, particularly in the case of the Firebolt, her close friendships with Ron and Harry are worth sacrificing in order to keep the two safe and healthy (she suspects the Firebolt came from Sirius Black, whom they believe at that point is trying to kill Harry). This suggests that at times, being a good friend means going against a friend's wishes with the understanding that, eventually, the angry friend will appreciate the gesture and concern. However, for most of the novel, this concept is lost on Harry and Ron. Instead, they blame Hermione for their misery and refuse to speak to her, which means that Hermione is alone and effectively friendless at a time in her life when, thanks to her use of the Time-Turner, she could really use camaraderie. Eventually, Hagrid takes it upon himself to talk to the boys about Hermione and their treatment of her. He disappointedly tells them that he'd hoped they'd know enough to prioritize friendships over objects, which is the kick that Harry and Ron need to make up with Hermione and move in the direction of a more mature view of friendships and relationships.

The novel explores these ideas in a slightly different way in the case of James Potter, Sirius Black, Remus Lupin, and Peter Pettigrew, who are adults or deceased in the present but attended Hogwarts a generation before the trio. Lupin was allowed to attend Hogwarts in spite of the fact that he's a werewolf--in the wizarding world, werewolves are shunned and experience discrimination, as they're believed to be subhuman and dangerous. The Shrieking Shack and an accompanying tunnel, guarded by the Whomping Willow, were constructed so he had a safe place to transform every month, and Lupin's true identity was kept secret from the student body. Lupin's friends, however, became understandably curious about where and why he disappeared every month. When they learned the truth, rather than shunning him, they set out to figure out how to turn themselves into Animagi, humans who can transform into animals at will.

Because of the dangers associated with turning oneself into an

Animagus, Lupin sees this as the ultimate sacrifice on the part of his friends--they could've died or suffered permanent damage had things gone wrong, let alone the fact that attempting the transition without Ministry supervision is illegal. However, at the time, this also appeared to be the ultimate act of friendship. James, Sirius, and Peter weren't in danger around the werewolf Lupin in their animal forms, which enabled them to turn Lupin's horrifying monthly transformation into something exciting, fun, and, most importantly, something he didn't have to go through alone. With friends, the experience became bearable.

It's important to note that in the novel's present, Lupin and Sirius acknowledge that what they did as teens was shockingly dangerous and immature of them--their gallivanting could have easily resulted in Lupin biting someone, while becoming Animagi in the first place represented a similarly dangerous lack of judgment. In the present, Harry and Ron's choice to ignore and be mean to Hermione comes across as stubbornly immature to both the reader and the adults in the trio's lives. By offering the adults' mature perspective on their own teenage friendships, however, the novel offers the hope that Harry and Ron will one day recognize their immaturity at this point in time. In the same vein, the progress that the friends do make in this regard over the course of their third year acts as proof that they are well on their way to growing up, developing adult relationships, and acquiring increasingly more mature critical thinking skills.



SYMBOLS

Symbols appear in [blue text](#) throughout the Summary and Analysis sections of this LitChart.



WITCH HUNTS

Though Harry offers little insight into his third-year History of Magic curriculum, it presumably deals with historical witch hunts: Harry spends much of his time in Diagon Alley writing his summer homework essays on witch hunts, and his final exams also ask about the subject. When the novel introduces the reader to Harry doing his summer homework on witch hunts, it sets the stage for the novel's deeper exploration of the wizarding justice system. In this way, the historical witch hunts that Harry learns about in school--which were, per his textbook, ineffective, silly, and misguided--set up the precedent that so-called justice isn't always just. However, it's also telling that the historical witch hunts were conducted by muggles using their own justice system. In this way, the novel also illustrates how much perspective matters: while the muggles thought their hunts were good, just, and effective, the wizards knew that the hunts were none of those things.



DEMENTORS

Dementors are the non-human guards of the wizard prison Azkaban; they're tall, hooded figures with rotting flesh. They feed on happiness and souls and guard prisoners by sapping them of any happy thoughts, thereby compromising prisoners' abilities to even remember what life is like on the outside. Though Harry initially believes that the dementors are a fair punishment for hardened criminals, especially those in league with Voldemort, he soon learns that the dementors themselves aren't at all fair. They're indiscriminate when it comes to sucking the life out of people and will prey on an excited crowd of Quidditch spectators, innocent children, and criminals alike. With this realization, the dementors become a symbol for the corruption of the Ministry of Magic as a whole. Like the dementors, the Ministry is willing to prey on whomever is an easy target for a given crime, and it's far more interested in scaring people and acting in its own best interest than it is in actually doling out real, impartial justice.



QUOTES

Note: all page numbers for the quotes below refer to the Scholastic edition of *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* published in 2001.

Chapter One Quotes

●● Non-magic people (more commonly known as Muggles) were particularly afraid of magic in medieval times, but not very good at recognizing it. On the rare occasion that they did catch a real witch or wizard, burning had no effect whatsoever.

Related Characters: Harry Potter, Sirius Black

Related Themes:   

Related Symbols: 

Page Number: 2

Explanation and Analysis

As Harry tries to secretly do his homework at the Dursleys' house, he reads about how medieval muggles were bad at identifying real witches and even worse at actually punishing them for their "transgressions." This introduces witch hunts as a symbol for government, and manhunts in particular, gone wrong--the medieval witch hunts were incapable of making a real impact. Though Harry doesn't realize it at this point, this becomes a model for how his own government functions in the present. The Ministry of Magic's attempts to capture Sirius Black and imprison him

for a crime he didn't commit are ineffective and misguided-- and importantly, Black is able to escape from Azkaban, just as real witches and wizards were able to avoid actually burning.

Chapter Two Quotes

☞ "No need to tell us he's no good," snorted Uncle Vernon, staring over the top of his paper at the prisoner. "Look at the state of him, the filthy layabout! Look at his hair!"

Related Characters: Uncle Vernon (speaker), Harry Potter, Sirius Black

Related Themes: 

Page Number: 17

Explanation and Analysis

Harry and the Dursleys see Sirius Black on the muggle news, and Sirius's mug shot shows that he's dirty and has stringy hair. As far as Vernon is concerned, this is the most offensive thing about him. This reflects what the muggle television tells its viewers about Black: they say that he's an escaped criminal, but offer no information on his crime or where he escaped from. In reality, Sirius Black is (supposedly) one of the most dangerous wizarding criminals of all time, and the state of his hair is the last thing that anyone needs to be worried about. This is then able to illustrate clearly how perspective and a little bit of information can fundamentally change how a person interprets a given situation.

Chapter Three Quotes

☞ But this didn't tally at all with Harry's past dealings with the Ministry of Magic. "Last year, I got an official warning just because a house-elf smashed a pudding in my uncle's house!" he told Fudge, frowning. "The Ministry of Magic said I'd be expelled from Hogwarts if there was any more magic there!"

Related Characters: Harry Potter (speaker), Cornelius Fudge, Aunt Marge

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 45

Explanation and Analysis

After Fudge sits Harry down for a chat and says nothing

about expelling him, Harry points out that he was threatened with expulsion last year for a crime he didn't do. As if it weren't enough that he was blamed for something he didn't do last year, this makes it clear to Harry that his government isn't to be trusted when it comes to evaluating people accused of crimes, doling out fair punishments, or following through when they say they're going to do something.

Though it takes Harry much of the novel to connect this realization to Sirius Black's case, it becomes clear that the same principles apply in that situation as well. The Ministry of Magic didn't give Black a trial, and they imprisoned him for a crime he didn't commit on the word of muggles who didn't know what exactly they saw. This shows that, no matter how big or small a crime might be, the Ministry of Magic can't be trusted to properly deal with it.

Chapter Four Quotes

☞ "The guards told Fudge that Black's been talking in his sleep for a while now. Always the same words: 'He's at Hogwarts...he's at Hogwarts.' Black is deranged, Molly, and he wants Harry's dead. If you ask me, he thinks murdering Harry will bring You-Know-Who back to power. Black lost everything the night Harry stopped You-Know-Who, and he's had twelve years alone in Azkaban to brood on that."

Related Characters: Mr. Weasley (speaker), Harry Potter, Sirius Black, Cornelius Fudge, Mrs. Weasley

Related Themes:   

Related Symbols: 

Page Number: 66

Explanation and Analysis

Harry overhears Mr. and Mrs. Weasley talking about the fact that Sirius Black is after him and wants him dead. At this point, Mr. and Mrs. Weasley have no reason not to believe the same story as the rest of the wizarding world, which states that Black was one of Voldemort's followers. Given this belief, it's understandable that Mr. Weasley hears "He's at Hogwarts" and assumes that Black is talking about Harry.

However, once Harry learns that Black is actually after Peter Pettigrew, who's spent twelve years in hiding as Ron's rat Scabbers, he realizes that Black is saying that Pettigrew is at Hogwarts, not Harry. In other words, this passage illustrates how what a person knows of a given situation colors how they interpret it. This then makes the case that

people should endeavor to listen and find out the whole truth, rather than buy stories put out by the Ministry that aren't at all true.

Chapter Six Quotes

☞ "We're witnesses," said Harry. "You said hippogriffs attack if you insult them. It's Malfoy's problem that he wasn't listening. We'll tell Dumbledore what really happened."

"Yeah, don't worry, Hagrid, we'll back you up," said Ron.

Related Characters: Harry Potter, Ron Weasley (speaker), Rubeus Hagrid, Draco Malfoy, Buckbeak

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 121

Explanation and Analysis

After the hippogriff Buckbeak attacks Malfoy because Malfoy said something insulting, Harry and Ron comfort Hagrid and offer to help him with the court case they're sure is going to follow. Harry and Ron's confidence in their power as witnesses shows that, at this point, they believe that the Committee for the Disposal of Dangerous Creatures is going to act fairly and take them seriously. This, of course, ignores the fact that the Committee is controlled by Lucius Malfoy, who would like nothing more than to make Hagrid's life miserable. Taken together, this shows that Harry and Ron aren't yet aware of the corruption that plagues the Ministry of Magic and all its smaller offices, and it's going to take losing what should have been an easy case to show them that they shouldn't trust their government to handle crimes properly or impartially.

Chapter Seven Quotes

☞ "Possibly no one's warned you, Lupin, but this class contains Neville Longbottom. I would advise you not to entrust him with anything difficult. Not unless Miss Granger is hissing instructions in his ear."

Related Characters: Professor Snape (speaker), Hermione Granger, Professor Lupin, Neville Longbottom

Related Themes:  

Page Number: 132

Explanation and Analysis

As Snape leaves Lupin and his class to their lesson with the boggart, he meanly warns Lupin of Neville Longbottom's incompetence. First, it's worth noting why Snape thinks that Neville is incompetent in the first place: Snape terrifies Neville and teaches Neville's worst subject, which means that Snape never sees Neville at his best and does nothing to help Neville improve. Snape sees Neville like this and treats him this way because he doesn't think highly of his students as people, and he allows his hatred of Gryffindor students in particular to color how he treats them during class.

Then, Snape's choice to call Neville out in front of another teacher, while extremely unprofessional and rude, also seeks to discredit Neville in the eyes of other teachers. In this way, Snape shows that he's trying to make sure that Neville never has a chance to succeed.

Chapter Eight Quotes

☞ "Why didn't you let me fight it?" said Harry abruptly.

Lupin raised his eyebrows.

"I would have thought that was obvious, Harry," he said, sounding surprised.

Harry, who had expected Lupin to deny that he'd done any such thing, was taken aback.

Related Characters: Harry Potter, Professor Lupin (speaker), Voldemort

Related Themes:  

Page Number: 155

Explanation and Analysis

When Lupin invites Harry to have tea with him one afternoon, Lupin surprises Harry by honestly telling Harry why he didn't allow him to fight the boggart--he was afraid that Harry's boggart would become Voldemort and scare the class. With this, Lupin shows first that he believes that Harry is mature enough to hear the truth, and that deserves to know it as well. In other words, he believes that it's important to treat Harry like the young adult that he is, as this is the only way that Harry will learn to act like an adult. Then, by giving his reason, Lupin also shows that he cares deeply for his students in general and doesn't want to put them in a position that will frighten them too much. While the boggart lesson was a scary one for all of them, Lupin's knew that not every student is scared of the other students' biggest fears--Harry, for example, isn't afraid of spiders like Ron is. Lupin knows, however, that everyone is afraid of

Voldemort and calculated that in order to make the lesson a successful one, that particular scary thing shouldn't make an appearance in his class.

Chapter Nine Quotes

☞ "It's very lucky he picked tonight, you know," said Hermione as they climbed fully dressed into their sleeping bags and propped themselves onto their elbows to talk. "The one night we weren't in the tower..."

"I reckon he's lost track of time, being on the run," said Ron. "Didn't realize it was Halloween. Otherwise he'd have come bursting in here."

Related Characters: Ron Weasley, Hermione Granger (speaker), Harry Potter, Sirius Black

Related Themes:  

Page Number: 163

Explanation and Analysis

In the aftermath of Sirius Black's first break-in, Hermione and Ron discuss how lucky it was that nobody was upstairs in the common room for Black to kill. This discussion relies entirely on their belief at this point that Black is out to kill Harry and, given the "fact" that he killed thirteen other people, they believe he'd have no problem killing other students. However, because they don't have the whole story, they don't realize that Black actually has no interest in killing Harry—he's after Peter Pettigrew, who's currently in disguise as Scabbers. Sneaking into the common room when nobody was around would thus ensure that Black had unfettered access to his real quarry; it wasn't a mistake, as his goal isn't to hurt students.

☞ "Didn't they want to help, sir?" said Percy. "Oh yes," said Dumbledore coldly. "But I'm afraid no dementor will cross the threshold of this castle while I am headmaster."

Related Characters: Albus Dumbledore, Percy Weasley (speaker), Harry Potter, Ron Weasley, Hermione Granger, Sirius Black

Related Themes:  

Related Symbols: 

Page Number: 165

Explanation and Analysis

After the teachers finish searching the castle for Sirius Black, Percy questions why the dementors didn't help with the search. Dumbledore's reply alludes first to the fact that he doesn't have any control over the ministry who posted the dementors at Hogwarts in the first place. As a major part of Harry's coming of age over the course of the series has to do with his slowly growing understanding that Dumbledore isn't in control of everything, it's important that Harry hear that there are people who have more power than Dumbledore.

Second, Dumbledore's insistence that he'll do everything in his power to keep the dementors out of the castle shows that he puts his students' health and safety above even finding someone who, at this point, is believed to be a murderer. Because he believes the students are safe from Sirius Black in the Great Hall, he sees no reason to let in the dementors who have already proven themselves willing to attack students without warning.

☞ "Anyone?" Snape said, ignoring Hermione. His twisted smile was back. "Are you telling me that Professor Lupin hasn't even taught you the basic distinction between--"

"We told you," said Parvati suddenly, "we haven't got as far as werewolves yet, we're still on--"

"*Silence!*" snarled Snape.

Related Characters: Professor Snape, Parvati Patil (speaker), Harry Potter, Ron Weasley, Hermione Granger, Professor Lupin

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 171

Explanation and Analysis

When Snape takes over Lupin's class during Lupin's illness, he refuses to listen to the students tell him about where they are in the curriculum, and he insults Lupin's teaching methods in the process. The fact that Snape feels entitled to critique Lupin's lesson plans is ridiculous in its own right, given that Snape himself doesn't appear to have thought-out lesson plans that lead his students through progressively more difficult material. Lupin's plans, from what the reader can see, do exactly that. Then, when he refuses to listen to the students and take their information seriously, he shows all of them that he doesn't believe them

capable of telling the truth or knowing what they're talking about.

However, when Parvati tries to tell Snape where they are, it shows that she does know what she's talking about. She understands that there's a progression and knows where the class is in it, which means that she also understands where werewolves fit into the curriculum. In this way, the reader--and Hermione, the only one to complete the following essay on werewolves--are led to suspect that Snape has ulterior motives for disregarding Lupin's lesson plans and teaching them about werewolves, something that Lupin confirms for Harry, Ron, and Hermione in the Shrieking Shack.

Chapter Eleven Quotes

💬 "But you were innocent!" said Hermione. Hagrid snorted.

"Think that matters to them? They don't care. Long as they've got a couple o' hundred humans stuck there with 'em, so they can leech all the happiness out of 'em, they don't give a damn who's guilty an' who's not."

Related Characters: Hermione Granger, Rubeus Hagrid (speaker), Harry Potter, Ron Weasley

Related Themes:   

Related Symbols: 

Page Number: 221

Explanation and Analysis

When they visit Hagrid one night, Hagrid tells the trio about his brief stint in Azkaban and about how the dementors work. Notably, he makes it very clear that the dementors don't care about innocence or guilt. What matters to them is that they have humans to punish and take from, regardless of the reasons those people are there.

Because the dementors are a tool used by the Ministry, this tips Harry, Ron, and Hermione off to the fact that their government functions much like the dementors do. The dementors are terrifying creatures and do a terrific job of scaring people into behaving; like the dementors, the Ministry also uses threats (the dementors themselves) to keep the population in line. Further, they don't care about innocence much, given that they imprison Sirius Black without a trial and never ask any questions regarding the possibility of his innocence.

Chapter Twelve Quotes

💬 "Well, isn't it obvious?" said Hermione, with a look of maddening superiority.

"If you don't want to tell us, don't," snapped Ron.

"Fine," said Hermione haughtily, and she marched off.

"She doesn't know," said Ron, staring resentfully after Hermione. "She's just trying to get us to talk to her again."

Related Characters: Ron Weasley, Hermione Granger (speaker), Harry Potter, Professor Lupin

Related Themes:  

Page Number: 236

Explanation and Analysis

During the time that Harry and Ron ignore Hermione, Hermione tries to get them to talk to her by insisting she knows what ails Lupin, who's been sick several times since Snape's first stint as their substitute. When Ron refuses to consider that Hermione might be right, it shows that he's putting his own beliefs above anyone else's and refusing to consider all the information in front of him. Notably, he's doing this because he's childishly ignoring Hermione for something that wasn't her fault, regardless of whether one considers what actually happened (Scabbers/Peter Pettigrew faked his own death) or what they believe happened (that Crookshanks ate Scabbers, something understandable given their species). With this, the novel shows that Ron is currently putting himself above his friendships and, to avoid having to do the difficult work of forgiving Hermione, he's isolating her instead.

Chapter Thirteen Quotes

💬 Hermione burst into tears. Before Harry could say or do anything, she tucked the enormous book under her arm, and, still sobbing, ran toward the staircase to the girls' dormitories and out of sight.

"Can't you give her a break?" Harry asked Ron quietly.

"No," said Ron flatly. "If she just acted like she was sorry--but she'll never admit she's wrong, Hermione. She's still acting like Scabbers has gone on vacation or something."

Related Characters: Harry Potter, Ron Weasley (speaker), Hermione Granger, Scabbers/Peter Pettigrew, Crookshanks

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 265

Explanation and Analysis

During a party, Ron refuses to make up with Hermione and makes her feel even worse for the fact that he believes Crookshanks ate Scabbers. When Harry asks Ron if he could give it up and forgive Hermione, it suggests that Harry has already come to the conclusion that Hermione is being unfairly punished for something she didn't do and couldn't control. Ron's behavior, on the other hand, looks extremely immature and shows that at this point, he's unwilling to see sense--that even if Crookshanks did eat Scabbers, such a thing could be expected--and instead is choosing to take the easy way out and blame Hermione for his emotions.

Chapter Fourteen Quotes

☝☝ "I'm not blamin' yeh!" said Hagrid, waving Harry's apology aside. "Gawd knows yeh've had enough ter be gettin' on with. I've seen yeh practicin' Quidditch ev'ry hour o' the day an' night--but I gotta tell yeh, I thought you two'd value yer friend more'n broomsticks or rats. Tha's all."

Related Characters: Rubeus Hagrid (speaker), Harry Potter, Ron Weasley, Hermione Granger, Scabbers/Peter Pettigrew

Related Themes: 

Page Number: 274

Explanation and Analysis

When Hagrid invites Harry and Ron down for tea, he encourages them to think carefully about how they're treating Hermione because, in his estimation, they're currently valuing Harry's Firebolt and Scabbers more than they're valuing her friendship. With this, Hagrid encourages the boys to consider that Hermione did what she thought was best in telling McGonagall about the Firebolt in particular. She believed that Harry was in danger and acted so that he'd be safe, knowing that he wouldn't appreciate it but also knowing that his safety would be guaranteed by the teachers. In pointing this out to Harry and Ron, Hagrid tries to impress upon them that while everything else in their lives might change, they need to take care of each other and recognize Hermione's help for what it is.

Chapter Fifteen Quotes

☝☝ "Malfoy's dad's frightened the Committee into it," said Hermione, wiping her eyes. "You know what he's like. They're a bunch of doddering old fools, and they were scared. There'll be an appeal, though, there always is. Only I can't see any hope....Nothing will have changed."

Related Characters: Hermione Granger (speaker), Harry Potter, Ron Weasley, Rubeus Hagrid, Buckbeak, Lucius Malfoy

Related Themes:  

Page Number: 292

Explanation and Analysis

When Hermione shares with Harry and Ron that Hagrid lost Buckbeak's case with the Committee for the Disposal of Dangerous Creatures, she correctly ascertains that Buckbeak only lost because the Committee is beholden to Lucius Malfoy. This shows that now, Hermione realizes that at least this part of the Ministry of Magic isn't to be trusted when it comes to actually doling out justice. The fact that the Committee members feel compelled to keep Mr. Malfoy happy means that regardless of the facts of a case, they're going to rule in a way that pleases him, rather than prioritizing the truth. With this, Hermione recognizes that they're fighting a system that's not actually designed to help them--instead, it's designed to look imposing and simply convince people that it's doing something.

Chapter Sixteen Quotes

☝☝ "THE DARK LORD LIES ALONE AND FRIENDLESS, ABANDONED BY HIS FOLLOWERS. HIS SERVANT HAS BEEN CHAINED THESE TWELVE YEARS. TONIGHT, BEFORE MIDNIGHT...THE SERVANT WILL BREAK FREE AND SET OUT TO REJOIN HIS MASTER. THE DARK LORD WILL RISE AGAIN WITH HIS SERVANT'S AID, GREATER AND MORE TERRIBLE THAN EVER BEFORE."

Related Characters: Professor Trelawney (speaker), Harry Potter, Sirius Black, Scabbers/Peter Pettigrew, Voldemort

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 324

Explanation and Analysis

Following Harry's Divination exam, Trelawney makes a real prediction and sees that Voldemort's servant will return to

him. Though Harry isn't sure at this point that he should take her seriously (Dumbledore only confirms later that this was likely a real prediction), it's important to note that regardless, the prediction can be used to support both versions of the truth--the first being that Sirius Black is Voldemort's servant, the second being that Peter Pettigrew is. This then comes to illustrate how somewhat vague predictions like this and vague statements in general can take on certain meanings depending on what a listener knows of a given situation. The fact that there are multiple ways to read the prophecy also plants a seed that will be important for Harry to think about later in the series, when he learns that though Trelawney's real predictions should be taken seriously, there is choice involved and, notably, her prophecies don't name names.

Chapter Seventeen Quotes

☞ "Your father would have done the same for me. Brave of you, not to run for a teacher. I'm grateful... it will make everything much easier..."

The taunt about his father rang in Harry's ears as though Black had bellowed it.

Related Characters: Sirius Black (speaker), Harry Potter, James Potter

Related Themes: 

Page Number: 339

Explanation and Analysis

After luring Harry and Hermione into the Shrieking Shack in pursuit of Ron, Sirius Black tells Harry that his father would've done the same thing. Notably, Harry reads this as a taunt, which he does because he believes that Black betrayed his parents and is Voldemort's servant. In other words, without all the information, Harry reads Black's statement as an insult when in reality, it's a compliment: Harry, like his father, is brave and doesn't always rely on adult help when he could benefit from doing so.

This same idea applies to the rest of what Harry hears in the Shrieking Shack and shows him that much of what he heard over the course of his third year at Hogwarts can be read in multiple ways. Things finally make sense when Harry learns that Hermione has been traveling through time to attend multiple classes, while Scabbers's poor health and Crookshanks's goal of eating him make much more sense once Harry knows the truth.

Chapter Eighteen Quotes

☞ "I was terrified they would desert me the moment they found out what I was. But of course, they, like you, Hermione, worked out the truth..."

"And they didn't desert me at all. Instead, they did something for me that would make my transformations not only bearable, but the best times of my life. They became Animagi."

Related Characters: Professor Lupin (speaker), Harry Potter, Ron Weasley, Hermione Granger, Sirius Black, Scabbers/Peter Pettigrew, James Potter

Related Themes: 

Page Number: 354

Explanation and Analysis

Lupin explains to Harry, Ron, and Hermione that his friends at school (Sirius Black, Peter Pettigrew, and James Potter) became Animagi so they could keep him company while he transformed into a werewolf. With this, Lupin makes it clear that friendship is its own kind of magic, as he reads becoming Animagi as the ultimate sacrifice and act of friendship on the part of his friends. Their sacrifice allowed Lupin to feel better about his own identity and his situation, as they made it less painful and, most importantly, less lonely. This offers Harry, Ron, and Hermione some insight into how their own friendship functions and how they can support each other, just as Lupin's friends supported him. For them, this starts with Ron forgiving Hermione for the Scabbers debacle and continues as the friends go on to support each other through the following four novels.

☞ "That was still really dangerous! Running around in the dark with a werewolf! What if you'd given the others the slip, and bitten somebody?"

"A thought that still haunts me," said Lupin heavily. "And there were near misses, many of them. We laughed about them afterwards. We were young, thoughtless--carried away with our own cleverness."

Related Characters: Hermione Granger, Professor Lupin (speaker), Harry Potter, Ron Weasley, Sirius Black, Scabbers/Peter Pettigrew, James Potter

Related Themes: 

Page Number: 355

Explanation and Analysis

When Hermione points out that things could've gone horribly wrong with Lupin running around in his werewolf form, Lupin agrees that she's right--he and his friends were careless in their youth. When Lupin admits that turning into Animagi and roaming the Hogwarts grounds with him as a werewolf wasn't a good choice, he suggests that even the best of friends can make mistakes that exhibit poor judgment. In terms of the novel as a whole, this idea that friends make bad choices, but that they can later see them for what they were, offers some hope that Harry, Ron, and Hermione will one day see their childish spats as such and recognize that there were more important things at work than their silly arguments. However, it's important to also note that while Lupin fully accepts the danger of what he and his friends did, he doesn't condemn their actions. For him, having his friends around to make his transformations better was invaluable and outweighs even the objectively poor judgment that they all showed.

that he gets credit for turning Black in.

☞ "Of course," Lupin breathed. "So simple...so brilliant...he cut it off himself?"

"Just before he transformed," said Black. "When I cornered him, he yelled for the whole street to hear that I'd betrayed Lily and James. Then, before I could curse him, he blew apart the street with the wand behind his back, killed everyone within twenty feet of himself--and sped down into the sewer with the other rats..."

Related Characters: Professor Lupin, Sirius Black (speaker), Harry Potter, Ron Weasley, Professor Lupin, Scabbers/Peter Pettigrew, James Potter, Lily Potter

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 363

Explanation and Analysis

Black finally tells everyone in the Shrieking Shack how and why he was imprisoned for killing Lily and James: Peter Pettigrew framed him. Pettigrew's actions show that he was a master manipulator who knew that, given the Ministry's desire to put Voldemort's supporters behind bars, they wouldn't ask too many questions if he made it look obvious enough what had happened. It's untrue that Black betrayed Lily and James, but because Black never told anyone that he'd made Pettigrew the new Secret Keeper, he had no way to prove his version of events. In this way, Pettigrew demonstrates that even though he was working against the Ministry at this time, he knew how to manipulate the Ministry, utilize his position as an underestimated, weak wizard, and successfully frame someone.

Chapter Nineteen Quotes

☞ "But if--if there was a mistake--"

"KEEP QUIET, YOU STUPID GIRL!" Snape shouted, looking suddenly quite deranged. "DON'T TALK ABOUT WHAT YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND!"

Related Characters: Hermione Granger, Professor Snape (speaker), Harry Potter, Ron Weasley, Professor Lupin, Sirius Black, Scabbers/Peter Pettigrew

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 360

Explanation and Analysis

When Snape finally shows himself in the Shrieking Shack, he screams at Hermione when she tries to encourage him to listen to what Lupin and Black have to say. This stands in sharp contrast to how Lupin handles Hermione's questions during their conversation in the shack. While Lupin takes them seriously and makes sure that they're answered to her satisfaction, Snape goes so far as to call Hermione stupid. With this, he shows her again that he doesn't care for her as a person and, in this situation, doesn't think she's even capable of understanding what's going on. This is ironic, of course, given that the reader is aware at this point that Snape is the one who doesn't know what's going on and doesn't even want to understand, for that matter. As far as Snape is concerned, Black is guilty and he'll do anything--including scream ugly words at his students--to make sure

Chapter Twenty-One Quotes

☞ "Yes, I do," said Dumbledore quietly. "But I have no power to make other men see the truth, or to overrule the Minister of Magic..."

Harry stared up into the grave face and felt as though the ground beneath him were falling sharply away. He had grown used to the idea that Dumbledore could solve anything. He had expected Dumbledore to pull some amazing solution out of thin air. But no...their last hope was gone."

Related Characters: Albus Dumbledore (speaker), Harry Potter, Hermione Granger, Sirius Black, Cornelius Fudge

Related Themes:    

Page Number: 393

Explanation and Analysis

After Dumbledore tells Harry that he can't make Fudge believe the truth, Harry experiences a major coming-of-age moment. While Harry spends much of the novel resenting the adults around him for keeping important information about Sirius Black from him, that doesn't stop him from trusting Dumbledore and believing that Dumbledore is capable of fixing anything. The realization that Dumbledore can't fix this means that, for the first time, Harry has to grapple with the fact that he can't always rely on the adults around him to protect him and put things right, no matter what the truth is. This also reinforces that Dumbledore doesn't have any power within the Ministry itself, something that's supported by the fact that Dumbledore believes Black's story while Fudge doesn't. In choosing to believe the truth, Dumbledore positions himself on the side of true good (which at this point shifts away from the Ministry) while Harry also completes his own transition to understanding that he shouldn't trust the government to protect him.

💬 "Did anyone see you?"
 "Yes, haven't you been listening? I saw me but I thought I was my dad! It's okay!"

Related Characters: Harry Potter, Hermione Granger (speaker), Sirius Black, James Potter

Related Themes:  

Related Symbols: 

Page Number: 393

Explanation and Analysis

After Harry successfully conjures his Patronus, thereby saving Hermione, Sirius, and himself, he discovers that the

rules surrounding time travel can be broken—but it can only be clear that they were broken to the person going back in time, not the version of himself going through events for the first time. This helps Harry to continue developing his understanding that the world isn't black and white. Just as Dumbledore can't fix everything and Trelawney's predictions can be read multiple ways, the rules of time travel are filled with shades of gray that allow for all sorts of leeway if one knows where to look for it.

Chapter Twenty-Two Quotes

💬 "It didn't make any difference," said Harry bitterly. "Pettigrew got away."

"Didn't make any difference?" said Dumbledore quietly. "It made all the difference in the world, Harry. You helped uncover the truth. You saved an innocent man from a terrible fate."

Related Characters: Harry Potter, Albus Dumbledore (speaker), Sirius Black, Scabbers/Peter Pettigrew

Related Themes:    

Page Number: 425

Explanation and Analysis

During a conversation between Harry and Dumbledore, Dumbledore encourages Harry to believe that he didn't act in vain and that he actually did a very valuable thing. With this, Dumbledore attempts to shift Harry's focus away from the formal justice system for a moment. He implies that the formal justice system, as espoused by the Ministry of Magic, isn't actually effective in carrying out justice. Instead, Dumbledore wants Harry to see that justice is capable of happening, but it needs to be supported by individuals, acting alone or almost alone, who know they're doing the right thing. Further, he suggests that learning the truth is more important than formally clearing Sirius's name. Now that Harry knows the truth, he understands that Sirius is a valuable ally going forward, and he also knows that his true enemy is Peter Pettigrew—someone who Harry, like everyone else, thought was dead until a day ago.



SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS

The color-coded icons under each analysis entry make it easy to track where the themes occur most prominently throughout the work. Each icon corresponds to one of the themes explained in the Themes section of this LitChart.

CHAPTER ONE

The narrator explains that Harry Potter is very unusual: he hates the summer holidays, desperately wants to do his homework, and is a wizard. Late at night, Harry lies in bed under his covers. With a flashlight, he reads through his textbook and tries to write his essay on the pointlessness of fourteenth-century [witch hunts](#). As he works, he listens carefully for the Dursleys. Aunt Petunia, Uncle Vernon, and Dudley are Harry's only relatives, but they're non-magical people (muggles) and hate magic. They'd initially tried to keep Harry's spellbooks from him, but Harry managed to sneak a few out so he could finish his homework and avoid detention.

Unfortunately, Harry is already on thin ice with Uncle Vernon and Aunt Petunia: his best friend Ron tried to telephone early in the summer, but being a wizard, he'd never used a telephone before. Vernon picked up Ron's call and Ron proceeded to yell into the phone and tell Vernon he went to Hogwarts. After that, Vernon yelled at Harry for giving out his phone number and Ron didn't call again. Harry's other friend, Hermione, didn't call either, which has made for a lonely summer. Vernon did decide that Harry could let his owl, Hedwig, out at night, but forbade him from sending letters.

When Harry gets to a stopping point in his essay, he hides his books under a loose floorboard. He checks the time and notices it's one in the morning, and it's now his birthday. Harry doesn't care much about his birthdays; he's never received a card. He walks to the window, wondering where Hedwig is.

The narrator explains that the most unusual thing about Harry is the lightning bolt scar on his forehead. He got it twelve years ago when the dark lord Voldemort murdered Harry's parents, Lily and James, and failed to murder Harry. The curse rebounded onto Voldemort and he disappeared. Harry fought Voldemort last year, and he thinks he's lucky he made it to age thirteen.

By introducing the third installment of the series with Harry's homework on witch hunts and burnings, the novel makes it clear that justice will be a primary concern of Harry's third year. Readers even vaguely familiar with the history of witch hunts will know that they were a pointless endeavor that sought to make a show of justice—just as the Ministry of Magic goes on to do throughout the novel.



When Uncle Vernon forbids Harry from using Hedwig to send notes, it shows that he understands how important Harry's friendships are to him. This introduces the idea that loneliness is a dangerous state to be in, as at this point, it means that Harry is entirely isolated from his wizarding community and has no idea what's going on in his world.



The fact that Harry hasn't received a card before reinforces how alone he is, and not just because he's at the Dursleys': The house-elf Dobby kept him from receiving birthday cards last year, which though not Ron and Hermione's fault, certainly influences how Harry thinks of his birthdays and how others perceive them.



For Harry, he recognizes that growing up is a privilege he's lucky to have, given how close he's come to Voldemort. His previous brushes with Voldemort suggest that the wizarding justice system isn't entirely effective, given that a child was more useful than the Ministry.



Harry notices three owls flying towards him and opens his window to let them in. The large gray owl, Errol, keels over. He belongs to the Weasleys and is old, so Harry unties the parcel and carries him to Hedwig's cage. Hedwig joins Errol once Harry takes her package. The third owl is from Hogwarts; it carries a letter and another package. Harry opens Errol's package and finds his first birthday card and a newspaper article saying that Mr. Weasley won the Daily Prophet's Grand Prize Galleon Draw. The accompanying photograph shows all nine Weasleys and Ron's pet rat, Scabbers, on vacation in Egypt. In a letter, Ron apologizes for the phone debacle and talks about the curses on the pyramids. He also includes a note about his gift: a Pocket Sneakoscope, which is supposed to detect untrustworthy people.

Hedwig's parcel contains a card from Hermione. She writes that she's on vacation in France and asks if Harry will be able to meet her and Ron in London. Harry opens her gift, a broomstick servicing kit. He can't wait to use it on his Nimbus Two Thousand. Then, Harry picks up the final parcel. It's from Hagrid, the Hogwarts gamekeeper. Before Harry can get it unwrapped all the way, the object snaps like it has jaws. Harry picks up his lamp and then dumps the object out of the wrapping. It's a book titled *The Monster Book of Monsters* and it scuttles away.

Hoping the Dursleys are still asleep, Harry stalks the book and finally manages to tie a belt around it. He then opens Hagrid's card, which ominously says that the book will be useful for the school year. Harry turns to the letter from Hogwarts itself, which includes his booklist and a permission form that, if signed, allows the student to visit the village of Hogsmeade. Harry's heart sinks; he knows his aunt and uncle won't want to sign the form. He decides to worry about it tomorrow, crosses off another day on his countdown to September first, and lies down in bed to look at his birthday cards. He feels happy for the first time that it's his birthday.

CHAPTER TWO

The next morning, Harry goes down to breakfast and finds Aunt Petunia, Uncle Vernon, and Dudley watching TV. Harry sits and helps himself to toast as a newscaster warns viewers to be on the lookout for Sirius Black, an escaped criminal. Vernon snorts that Black is a "filthy layabout" and looks at Harry, whose hair refuses to behave but is still, in Harry's opinion, neater than Black's. The reporter turns to a new story, which angers Vernon—he shouts that hanging is the only way to deal with criminals like that.

The simple fact that Hermione and Ron send Harry gifts this year (Hedwig has Hermione's package) indicates that they're starting to grow up, become more mature, and discover different ways to show Harry that they care about him. With this, the novel situates itself as a midway point in the series that sees Harry, Ron, and Hermione transform from innocent and naïve children into functional adults, gradually becoming more mature as the series progresses.



Hagrid plays a special role in the trio's friendship, as he's both an adult authority figure and a friend who treats them like people worthy of trust and respect. Hagrid then becomes the trio's first indication that they can indeed be friends with adults. Hagrid's questionable gift, however, impresses upon Harry that Hagrid isn't a perfect friend, even if he is an adult.



The ominous note from Hagrid doesn't make sense to Harry now, but it does introduce the novel's exploration of perspective to the reader. In other words, what seems strange and ominous to Harry makes perfect sense to Hagrid, as this is the required textbook for his Care of Magical Creatures class. Hagrid also finds such items or creatures funny, while Harry clearly doesn't share this interpretation.



Uncle Vernon's assessment of Sirius Black shows that what he thinks of the criminal is heavily influenced by the way the muggle news portrays Black: Harry will soon learn that Black is a dangerous wizard criminal, and that his unkempt appearance is the last thing anyone should worry about when it comes to Black.



Uncle Vernon announces that he needs to go pick up Aunt Marge. Startled, Harry asks if Marge is truly coming. She's been horrible to him since he was little. Vernon snarls that she'll be visiting for a week and tells Harry that he must behave and keep his "abnormality" a secret. Then, Vernon says that he's told Marge that Harry attends St. Brutus's Secure Center for Incurably Criminal Boys. Harry, furious, feels that this is the worst birthday present ever. Petunia fusses over Dudley as Vernon heads for the door, but Harry has an idea. He follows Vernon to the hallway and brings up the Hogsmeade permission form. Harry says that if Vernon signs the form, he'll remember the story and play along. Panicked, Vernon agrees.

Harry heads upstairs and morosely packs up his birthday haul to hide with his spellbooks. Then, he tells Hedwig to go stay with the Weasleys; she's likely to give him away if she stays. Not long after he puts Hedwig's cage away, Aunt Petunia yells for Harry to come downstairs. When they hear Uncle Vernon and Marge arrive, Harry opens the door. Marge, her bulldog Ripper tucked under her arm, goes straight for Dudley. Dudley escapes from the hug with money as Marge kisses Petunia. Harry takes Marge's suitcase upstairs as the rest of the family goes to the kitchen for tea.

When Harry finally enters the kitchen, Ripper growls at him and Marge confirms with a grimace that Harry still lives here. He remembers the Hogsmeade form, forces a grin, and as the conversation turns to St. Brutus's, he decides to play it up and tells Marge that they beat him all the time. She's not impressed. Throughout her visit, Marge torments Harry and insults his parents. At one point, her wine glass explodes and Harry excuses himself—he lost control and knows that if he keeps on accidentally destroying things, he could be expelled.

For the next few days, Harry thinks of his broom care handbook whenever Aunt Marge is mean to him. On her last night, they get all the way through dinner before Marge starts in on Harry. After a large glass of brandy, she compliments Dudley's "healthy" size and then calls Harry "runty." She insults Harry's parents and when Uncle Vernon says that James Potter was unemployed, Harry loses his temper. He tells her that his parents didn't die in a car crash and as Marge swells with fury, she starts to literally swell. She rises out of her chair and bounces off the ceiling, and as Vernon tries to pull her down, Ripper bites his leg.

Uncle Vernon's fear of Harry and of magic in general encourages him to spin this ridiculous story for Aunt Marge, which suggests that feeling strong emotions can influence how a person chooses to portray facts. As Marge is a muggle, it's worth noting that were Harry to tell the truth, it would make Harry and possibly Vernon himself look ridiculous, which shows that Vernon has a lot at stake in making sure that his preferred story is the one that, as far as Marge is concerned, becomes "true."



Harry's desire to properly play the part of a criminal muggle boy shows just how badly he wants to earn the signature to go to Hogsmeade. For him, allowing his enrollment at St. Brutus's to be true means that he'll be able to go on to live a happier life at school. This indicates that there are times when lying or spinning tales like this has positive effects.



Harry was threatened with expulsion in the second novel if he did magic outside of school again. His fear here suggests that he could easily be expelled even for accidents like this, which begins to create the sense that the Ministry of Magic isn't very understanding: they'll persecute anyone, even if that anyone is a teenager who made a mistake.



When Harry makes Marge swell up because of his anger, it indicates that Vernon's lie and Marge's rudeness are too much for Harry to bear—for him, it's far more important to tell the truth and deal with the consequences. The fact that Marge feels entitled to talk this way about Harry at all indicates that the story she believes is true gives her a great deal of power, while Harry's status as a child means he has little power to stand up to her.



Harry races away from the debacle. The door of the cupboard under the stairs flies open as he reaches it, and he heaves his trunk to the front door. As he fetches his things from upstairs, Uncle Vernon accosts Harry. He yells at Harry to fix Aunt Marge, but Harry refuses. His wand pointed at Vernon, he drags his trunk out into the street and starts to walk.

Vernon's request that Harry fix Marge indicates how little he knows about the wizarding world: it's unlikely that Harry, with only two years of education under his belt, has the skills necessary to put her right even if he agreed to try.



CHAPTER THREE

Harry gets several blocks before he has to rest in Magnolia Crescent. After ten minutes, he's in a full-blown panic. He did illegal magic and, to make matters worse, he's stranded in the muggle world. Harry wonders if he'll be kicked out of the wizarding world and laments that Hedwig is gone—he can't even ask Ron or Hermione for help. Realizing he also has no muggle money, Harry wonders if, since he's already expelled, he could enchant his trunk and fly to London. As Harry starts to fish in his trunk for the Invisibility Cloak, he feels like he's being watched. He senses somebody in an alleyway and lights his wand. He sees something huge with bright eyes. Terrified, he steps back and trips over his trunk.

Harry's belief that he's expelled already for what he did indicates that, at this point, he trusts the Ministry of Magic to follow through on what they said would happen. In other words, Harry sees the government as being black and white and doesn't expect to encounter shades of gray with it. This sets Harry up to, over the course of the novel, discover that the Ministry of Magic isn't actually black and white at all: while they'd like wizards to think they are, it's actually far more complicated.



Harry throws his hand out to catch himself and just as he hits the street, he hears a loud bang. He rolls out of the way as a purple bus stops in front of him. It reads "The Knight Bus" on the windshield. The conductor steps out and begins his spiel, introducing himself as Stan Shunpike. When he notices Harry on the ground, he stops and asks why Harry is lying down. Annoyed, Harry jumps up and looks back to the alleyway. He starts to explain that he saw a dog, but stops when he notices Stan looking uneasy. He tells Stan his name is Neville Longbottom and asks to go to London. Stan accepts Harry's money and then helps lift Harry's trunk onto the bus.

The fact that Harry didn't know about the existence of the Knight Bus reminds the reader again that Harry, with only two years of formal education and exposure to the wizarding world, still has a great deal to learn about his world. At this moment, Harry is receiving a valuable practical lesson about how his world works and what's available to him if he knows how to ask for it.



The bus is filled with beds instead of seats. Stan settles Harry in the bed behind the driver, Ernie Prang. With a bang, the bus seems to jump 100 miles—Stan explains that they're in Wales when he notices Harry's shocked face and says that muggles don't hear the bus because they don't listen well. He fetches an ill-looking witch, sees her off the bus, and then with another bang the bus jumps. Harry's stomach churns, both from the bus's action and from his worry about Aunt Marge.

Stan's comment about muggles not listening properly suggests that their inability to detect the wizarding world is just a matter of knowing what to look for—in other words, they don't see it because it's never occurred to them to question their own versions of reality, where buses like this are only fantastical ideas.



Stan opens up a copy of the *Daily Prophet* and Harry notices Sirius Black, the man from the muggle news, on the front page. When Harry shares this with Stan, Stan chuckles and gives the front page to Harry to read. The article reads that Black is still at large and that Cornelius Fudge is facing criticism for telling muggles about Black. It says that wizards are afraid of another massacre like the one twelve years ago: Black murdered thirteen people with one curse. Harry hands the page back to Stan and Stan explains that Black was in league with You-Know-Who. Not thinking, Harry says "Voldemort," which makes Ernie swerve and Stan yelp in fear.

Harry apologizes and asks Stan to tell him more about Black. Stan says that after Harry Potter bested Voldemort, the government tracked down Voldemort's supporters. Ministry officials cornered Black on a street and Black blew half the street to pieces, killing a wizard and twelve muggles. Then, he laughed and went quietly to Azkaban. Stan says that nobody's ever escaped from Azkaban before, since the Azkaban guards are so effective. Ernie tells Stan to change the subject; he hates the Azkaban guards.

Harry feels horrendous. He thinks that he broke the law just like Sirius Black did and wonders if inflating Aunt Marge is enough to land him in Azkaban. All Harry knows about the prison is what he heard from Hagrid, who spent two months there last year.

Stan gives Harry his hot chocolate and, finally, Harry is the last passenger. Ernie stops the bus in front of the Leaky Cauldron. Stan helps Harry with his trunk but instead of saying goodbye, he stands transfixed by something behind Harry. Harry hears a voice say, "There you are, Harry," and sees Cornelius Fudge. Fudge puts his hand on Harry's shoulder, testily thanks Stan for picking Harry up, and steers Harry inside. Stan and Ernie carry Harry's trunk in and Harry sadly waves goodbye before following Fudge.

Fudge motions for Harry to sit down and introduces himself. Puzzlingly, Fudge says that everyone was terrified when Harry ran away from the Dursleys, but all that matters is that he's safe now. He says that Marge is back to normal and won't remember a thing, and then he kindly says that though Vernon and Petunia are angry, they'll still house Harry next summer as long as he doesn't come home for Christmas or Easter. Harry insists he never wants to go back, which prompts Fudge to worriedly say that the family must all like each other deep down.

This article confirms that Uncle Vernon was way off base with his assessment of Sirius Black on the muggle news: there's more to worry about, even for muggles, than the fact that Black looks terrifying. Further, when the article notes that Fudge is being criticized for telling muggles about Black, it indicates that the government is being questioned for its policies, which suggests that Harry should question it too.



Notice that in Stan's story, there's no indication that Sirius Black ever went on trial for what he did. This suggests that while the story Stan tells was believed by many, there's a possibility that Black would be able to tell a different story and never got the opportunity to do so. In turn, this indicates that the wizard justice system isn't entirely fair and doesn't look deeper when it prosecutes someone.



Harry's belief that he's done something as bad as Sirius Black did points to how young and naïve he still is, while his fear of going to Azkaban suggests he thinks the Ministry won't take into account that he's only 13 in their punishment.



As far as Harry is concerned, this is the end of his life as he knows it. Again, this indicates that he takes the Ministry of Magic seriously and believes that they'll follow through and punish him for blowing up Aunt Marge. However, Fudge's behavior towards Harry, which reads as more fatherly than anything else, suggests that Harry is wrong in this regard.



Everything that Fudge says points to the possibility that Harry is somehow not in trouble, which indicates that Harry seriously misjudged what was going to happen. While it's still unclear why the ministry has made this change, it suggests that there's more information that Harry doesn't have yet. Without that information, Harry cannot get a full picture of what's going on.



Fudge says that the only matter left to discuss is where Harry should stay for the last three weeks of the summer holiday. Harry asks about his punishment for breaking the Decree for the Restriction of Underage Wizardry, but Fudge waves this away. Harry reminds Fudge that last year, he got a warning because a house-elf did magic at the Dursleys' house. Fudge insists that circumstances change and then goes to talk to Tom about booking Harry a room. Harry feels like there must be something going on—underage magic seems a small problem for the Minister of Magic to deal with personally.

Fudge and Tom return and Fudge makes Harry promise to stay in Diagon Alley. He seems oddly cheery as he packs up to leave, but seems to slip a little when Harry asks about Sirius Black. As the two shake hands, Harry asks if Fudge can sign his Hogsmeade permission form. Fudge uncomfortably refuses and then leaves, while Tom shows Harry to his room. Hedwig is already there.

CHAPTER FOUR

After a few days, Harry adjusts to his freedom. He spends his days exploring the shops in Diagon Alley. He does his homework at Florean Fortescue's Ice Cream Parlor, and Fortescue himself helps Harry with his essay on [witch hunts](#). He has to exercise control to not purchase the newest racing broom, the Firebolt, which is on display in the Quidditch shop. Harry does buy new robes, potions supplies, and schoolbooks. He's surprised to find *The Monster Book of Monsters* at the bookshop, but then realizes that it's the assigned text for Care of Magical Creatures.

The manager of the shop is relieved when Harry says he already has *The Monster Book of Monsters*. As the manager gets Harry his textbook for Divination, Harry notices the cover of another book and stares in shock: the book is about death omens, and the cover picture is of a hulking black dog. Harry rushes back to the Leaky Cauldron with his books, dumps them on his bed, and then looks in the mirror. He tells himself that he just saw a stray dog in Magnolia Crescent.

Harry begins looking for Ron and Hermione as the start of term approaches. He finds Seamus Finnigan and Dean Thomas, as well as Neville Longbottom. Finally, on the last day of the holiday, he runs into Ron and Hermione at the ice cream shop. Hermione immediately asks about Aunt Marge while Ron howls with laughter. Ron doesn't know why Fudge didn't punish Harry for his transgression—Mr. Weasley works at the ministry and so might have insight. Ron does say that the Ministry is providing cars to drive them to the train station tomorrow and invites Harry to join them.

Harry is correct that under normal circumstances, an expulsion probably isn't worth the Minister of Magic's personal involvement. His ability to recognize this shows that he's beginning to grow up, mature, and learn to think critically. Most importantly, he's starting to think critically about his government, how it functions, and why it functions the way it does.



Fudge's slip at Harry's mention of Sirius Black suggests that Black's escape has something to do with his leniency, though the narration is unclear about whether Harry puts this together or not. This reminds the reader that Harry's critical thinking skills aren't fully developed yet.



*Now that Harry knows *The Monster Book of Monsters* is an assigned textbook, Hagrid's cryptic note makes much more sense. This illustrates on a very small scale how simply having another shred of information can be enough to entirely change a person's perspective on something. The mention of witch hunts again reminds the reader that Harry will learn this year about how ridiculous "justice" can be.*



Again, now that Harry knows that a big black dog is a death omen, he's able to make more sense of past events and, more importantly, can look forward to the future and understand better what's going on if he does see the black dog again.



Though Ron doesn't know about Black's connection with Harry, it is likely that the adults in Ron's life do know. This reminds the reader that, because Harry, Ron, and Hermione are still children, what they learn about the world is still heavily filtered through their parents and other adult authority figures. The cars to get to the train station suggest that security is higher than it would normally be, though Ron's inability to notice this points to his immaturity.



Ron pulls out a box containing his new wand and Harry asks about Hermione's bulging bag of books. She begins listing all the classes she's taking and Harry asks if she's planning on eating or sleeping. Changing the subject, Hermione says she'd like to buy an owl, since her parents gave her money as an early birthday present. They head to the magical creature shop. Ron takes Scabbers, who is lethargic and droopy, to the counter so the witch can look him over. The witch asks how old Scabbers is and if he has any powers. Scabbers is twelve and, in the years that the Weasleys have had him, has shown no powers.

The witch says that a garden rat like Scabbers will only live for about three years and offers Ron some rat tonic. Before Ron can accept it, a huge orange cat leaps onto his head and then makes a dive for Scabbers. Scabbers races out of the shop, Harry and Ron in hot pursuit. Once they catch the rat, they head back to the shop. Hermione comes out as they get close but instead of an owl, she has the orange cat. Glowing, she calls the cat Crookshanks and gives Ron his rat tonic, insisting that Scabbers will be fine.

Harry, Ron, and Hermione find Mr. Weasley in the bar at the Leaky Cauldron. Harry asks about Sirius Black when he notices a photo in the paper again. Mr. Weasley sighs that all Ministry employees are on the lookout and shuts Ron down when he asks about a reward for catching him. Mrs. Weasley, Fred, George, Percy, and Ginny come into the bar, all carrying shopping bags. Percy, who has been made Head Boy, greets Harry pompously, and Fred and George mimic him. Mrs. Weasley says with pride that Percy is the second Head Boy in the family. When she points out that Fred and George weren't made prefects, they say that'd take all the fun out of life.

For dinner that night, the entire Weasley family eats with Harry and Hermione. They discuss transportation to King's Cross Station and Mrs. Weasley sends Ron to pack. As Harry gets to his room, he hears Ron and Percy fighting next door. Harry goes to investigate and learns that Percy's Head Boy badge and Scabbers's rat tonic are gone. Harry offers to go look in the bar for the rat tonic but as he passes a parlor, he hears Mrs. and Mr. Weasley fighting too.

Note that Harry is aware that Hermione's course load seems ridiculous. This indicates that he's able to observe things that are off, but he's not necessarily able to draw any conclusions about what he notices (he doesn't learn until the end of the novel that Hermione will use time travel to make it to all her classes).



Notice that, according to this witch, Scabbers has already outlived all expectations. When neither Ron nor Harry see anything strange about Scabbers's unusually long lifespan, it indicates that when something (like Scabbers's presence) is normalized, it becomes more difficult to ask questions about why exactly it is considered normal.



Mr. Weasley's quick move to shut down Ron's idea about catching Sirius Black himself shows that he's well aware that Harry and Ron already have a reputation of getting into trouble when there's trouble to be had. This tells the reader that all the adults in Harry and Ron's life are doing their best to keep them safe, as they know that things could quickly get dangerous if they're allowed to ask too many questions.



Again, notice that Harry doesn't question why the Ministry is escorting the Weasleys to the train station like this—and most importantly, it doesn't occur to Harry that the escort is actually for his benefit, not the Weasleys'. However, Harry doesn't make this leap because he trusts the adults around him and feels safe.



Harry hesitates to listen until he hears Mr. Weasley say that Harry has a right to know. Mrs. Weasley doesn't agree, but Mr. Weasley says it's for Harry and Ron's own safety. He points out that Sirius Black is mad and before he escaped, he was muttering "he's at Hogwarts" in his sleep—Black is after Harry and seems to believe that killing Harry will bring back Voldemort. Mrs. Weasley points out that Harry will be safe while Dumbledore is around and Mr. Weasley concedes that the Azkaban guards will be at Hogwarts, thereby making Harry safer. Harry hurries to find the rat tonic.

When Harry gets back upstairs, he finds Fred and George on the landing with Percy's badge—it now reads "Bighead Boy." He forces a laugh, gives Ron the rat tonic, and then shuts himself in his room. Everything makes sense now—Fudge was so lenient because Black is after Harry. Harry wonders why he doesn't feel more scared, but he does agree with Mrs. Weasley that with Dumbledore, he'll be safe. He also wonders what the deal is with the Azkaban guards, since everyone seems terrified of them. What bothers Harry most is that it seems likely that nobody will want him to visit Hogsmeade. He scowls, thinking that he's already escaped Voldemort three times, and flashes on the big dog he saw in Magnolia Crescent. He says out loud that he's not going to be murdered.

CHAPTER FIVE

The next morning, Harry is trying to persuade Hedwig to get in her cage when Ron comes in, annoyed about Percy. Harry tries to tell Ron about what he learned but Fred and George interrupt. Finally, everyone assembles downstairs with their trunks and animals. Hermione assures Crookshanks that she'll let him out on the train, while Ron snaps that Scabbers needs his peace. Mr. Weasley motions for everyone to follow him outside and into two cars. They reach the station early and then go through the barrier between platforms nine and ten in pairs.

Upon getting through the barrier Percy immediately goes to find Penelope Clearwater, his girlfriend. Ginny and Harry laugh at him and once everyone else is on the platform, they find an empty carriage. Mrs. Weasley kisses Harry goodbye and then Mr. Weasley calls Harry to come talk with him. Before Mr. Weasley can say anything, Harry says that he already knows about Sirius Black and isn't afraid. Mr. Weasley leads Harry back to the train and then asks for Harry's word that he won't go looking for Black. Harry is confused as he steps onto the train. As soon as the platform is out of view, he tells Ron and Hermione that they need to speak in private.

This conversation shows Harry that his trust in the adults around him and in the Ministry has blinded him to what's actually going on. Though it's likely that everyone is just trying to keep Harry safe, it's worth noting that now that Harry has this information, he'll be able to make more informed choices about what he does, where he goes, and how seriously he takes adults' attempts to protect him.



Harry's thought that he's already escaped Voldemort three times indicates that though he's a child, he does have an inflated sense of his own abilities and importance—it implies that he thinks the adults are being silly and that Harry doesn't see himself as needing protection. This suggests that as Harry grows, one of the things he'll have to learn is how to both ask for and accept help in situations like this as he can't do things entirely alone.



Ron's snappiness suggests that he's already concerned that it's going to be a tough year for Scabbers, but notice that he's taking it out on Hermione, not on Crookshanks himself. This suggests that he's placing an unfair amount of blame on Hermione, something that makes his youth and immaturity clear and foreshadows their fights throughout the year.



Mr. Weasley's request that Harry won't go looking for Black makes it very clear that there's more to the story that he's not telling Harry. Harry's confusion suggests that he's aware of this on some level, but notice that he doesn't question why Mr. Weasley would ask this of him. This again shows that Harry is young still and doesn't have well-developed critical thinking skills yet.



Harry, Ron, and Hermione find a compartment that's empty save for a man asleep. He looks ill and exhausted. Hermione reads his case, which reads that he's Professor Lupin—presumably, the new Defense Against the Dark Arts teacher. Harry shares what he overheard and what Mr. Weasley just made him promise. Hermione is horrified, while Ron insists that Harry would have to be stupid to go looking for Black. As they worry, Ron hears a tinny whistle. He pulls out Harry's Pocket Sneakoscope, explains where he got it to Hermione, and then stuffs it into a pair of socks and back into Harry's trunk.

Ron says that the Sneakoscope might be faulty and suggests that Harry get it checked in Hogsmeade. Hermione is very interested in Hogsmeade; it's the only non-muggle village in Britain. As she spouts off facts, Ron talks about all the candies he's going to buy at Honeydukes, the sweetshop. When they finally turn to Harry, Harry glumly explains that he can't go since the Dursleys didn't sign his permission form. Ron says that if McGonagall won't sign it, Fred and George probably know a secret passage to sneak Harry out. He also says that Black wouldn't dare attack Harry if he and Hermione were around. Hermione scoffs.

Hermione lets Crookshanks out of his basket. The cat immediately jumps onto Ron's lap and Hermione raises her voice when Ron shoves Crookshanks away. They go silent when Professor Lupin stirs, but he stays asleep. Crookshanks finally settles in an empty seat and watches Ron intently. An hour later, Draco Malfoy and his cronies, Crabbe and Goyle, stop by the compartment to ridicule Ron, but they leave when they notice the sleeping professor.

The weather grows increasingly worse and by evening, it's dark and pouring outside. Ron is thrilled when the train starts to slow down but Hermione insists it's too early to be there. The train comes to a stop and without warning, the lights go out. Ron sees people coming onto the train as Neville lets himself into the compartment, trips over Harry, and sits down. Hermione tries to leave, but runs into Ginny on her way out. As they argue, they hear Lupin tell them to be quiet. Lupin conjures a handful of flames, tells the students to stay put, and then moves towards the door.

Again, Ron's assertion that Harry would be stupid to look for Sirius Black shows that he too doesn't have fully developed critical thinking skills yet, as he fails to ask why Harry would want to do this in the first place and fails to recognize that the promise betrays that there is a reason, whatever it may be.



Here, Ron's insistence that the Sneakoscope is faulty shows that he's unwilling to think critically about the people around him right now. As the trio learns later, the Sneakoscope is going off because Scabbers is actually the wizard Peter Pettigrew. While there's no reason at this point for Ron to suspect this, the fact that he blames the Sneakoscope and not Crookshanks, who would be a convenient scapegoat, indicates that Ron is indeed beginning to grow and mature.



The fact that Malfoy, Crabbe, and Goyle stop bullying Harry and Ron when they see a professor adds another facet to the idea of perspective, as it suggests that these bullies understand that who's around to witness their bullying matters.



In the dark when nobody can see what's going on, it becomes clear that the students are young and can't necessarily fix things for themselves—they need an adult like Lupin to step in, take charge, and keep them safe. This reinforces the novel's assertion that Harry and his friends are at school to learn from teachers like Lupin, who ideally have their students' best interests at heart.



Before Lupin reaches the door, a towering, cloaked figure opens it. Harry sees that it has a slimy and scabby hand. The creature starts to draw a rattling breath and a feeling of cold sweeps over everyone in the compartment. Harry's eyes roll back, he hears a rushing in his ears, and then he hears a terrible scream. Suddenly, Harry wakes up to Ron slapping his face. The lights are on and the train is moving, but Harry feels ill. After he retakes his seat, he asks who screamed. According to Ron, nobody did. Lupin begins to break up a bar of chocolate and distributes the pieces. He explains that that was a **dementor** and goes to talk to the conductor.

Harry asks what happened, and Ron explains that Harry started having a fit. Professor Lupin approached the **dementor** and when it didn't move, he shot something silvery out of his wand at it. Nobody else fell out of their seats, however. Lupin returns and encourages everyone to eat the chocolate, and Harry feels warmth spread to his fingers as he does. The compartment is silent for the rest of the journey.

At the Hogsmeade train station, Harry, Ron, and Hermione hear Hagrid calling for the first-years. They follow the older students to coaches drawn by invisible horses and begin the ride to the castle. Harry notices two **dementors** on either side of the gate. To make things worse, when he gets out of the carriage, Malfoy maliciously asks if Harry actually fainted. He stops, however, when Lupin asks if there's a problem.

Harry, Ron, and Hermione enter the castle but before they can go into the Great Hall for the feast, they hear Professor McGonagall calling for Harry and Hermione. Ron goes to the feast alone as Harry and Hermione follow McGonagall to her office. Madam Pomfrey, the nurse, joins them at the office and immediately begins fussing over Harry. Madam Pomfrey says that he at least needs chocolate and is thrilled when she hears that Lupin already gave Harry some. With this, McGonagall excuses Harry. He waits a few minutes until Hermione and McGonagall are finished and then they head for the Great Hall.

As Harry and Hermione walk towards the Gryffindor table, Harry notices that people are pointing at him. Before he can tell Ron what McGonagall wanted, Professor Dumbledore stands to address the school. He explains that the **dementors** of Azkaban are at the school and that nobody may leave without permission. He says that dementors won't fall for tricks, disguises, or Invisibility Cloaks, and that they don't understand pleading or excuses. Then, Dumbledore introduces Professor Lupin. Ron notices that as the school applauds for Lupin, Professor Snape looks at Lupin with loathing. Dumbledore also announces that Hagrid will take over for the recently retired Care of Magical Creatures professor.

Harry and the reader soon learn that chocolate is an antidote to the dementors; this then becomes an early indicator that Professor Lupin knows what he's doing when it comes to the Dark Arts. This helps the students come to think of him already as a protective and trustworthy figure, while it also offers hope that his lessons will be more useful than what Harry and his classmates have learned in years past from questionably qualified professors.



By having Ron describe what the reader later learns is a Patronus as "something silvery," it shows how, without the knowledge of what the Patronus was, Ron can't properly describe what he saw. This makes the case that people must always be on the lookout for knowledge.



Again, Malfoy's unwillingness to taunt Harry in front of a teacher shows that he does respect the authority of teachers and knows they can get him in trouble. However, with this knowledge, Malfoy can simply get sneakier about how and where he taunts Harry.



Notice that Harry never questions what McGonagall needed to talk to Hermione about. This shows a major lack of curiosity that will, throughout the novel, keep Harry from understanding what Hermione is doing much of the time. With this, the novel makes the case that Harry will need to develop his sense of curiosity and his critical thinking skills if he wants to be able to see and understand things fully.



The way that Dumbledore describes the dementors suggests that they're not especially interested in justice, given that Dumbledore implies that errant students are at risk just as much as the criminal Sirius Black is. Remember that the dementors are an arm of the government as much as anything else—this starts to show that maybe Harry shouldn't think of the Ministry of Magic as trustworthy and, instead, should treat them more like he's being told to treat the Dementors.



With this, the tables fill with food. After the feast is over, Harry, Ron, and Hermione congratulate Hagrid, who seems overcome with emotion. The Gryffindors all climb up to Gryffindor tower and, at the portrait of the Fat Lady, Percy tells them that the new password is "Fortuna Major." As Harry climbs the stairs to his dormitory, he feels that he is home at last.

Now that Hagrid has been made a professor, he has even more responsibility to guide his students and make sure that they come away with a solid understanding of how to deal with magical creatures. His emotion at this suggests he understands the gravity of his promotion.



CHAPTER SIX

At breakfast the next morning, Malfoy performs a mock swooning fit. The Slytherins all laugh and Pansy Parkinson yells at Harry that the **dementors** are coming. George passes out schedules at the Gryffindor table and asks Harry what's wrong. When Ron motions towards Malfoy, Fred says that Malfoy nearly wet himself when the dementors stopped by their compartment. Harry feels better when Fred mentions that Harry will have the chance to best Malfoy at their first Quidditch match.

In this case, learning that Malfoy was just as scared as anyone else when the dementors came on the train gives Harry enough information to feel better about the fact that he fainted. This also shows that Malfoy is someone who's willing to put others down in order to make himself feel better—something that, if he's also going to grow up, he'll need to reevaluate.



Hermione looks over her schedule, happy to have new classes. Ron looks over her shoulder and insists that her schedule isn't right—she's taking three subjects at the same time—but Hermione just snaps at him. Hagrid passes the Gryffindor table, excitedly says that they'll be in his first lesson, and then says he's been preparing all morning. When he leaves, Ron anxiously wonders what Hagrid is preparing.

When Ron questions Hermione's schedule and notices that there's something fishy about it, it indicates that Ron is capable of observing things that are strange and categorizing them as such. Notice though that he's unable to take this further because Hermione doesn't let him—she's trying to control what he sees and what he thinks.



Harry, Ron, and Hermione head off for their first Divination lesson in the North Tower. It's a long walk and by the time they reach an empty landing, they're lost. Harry watches the painting on the landing; a pony walks into the scene, pursued by a squat knight. The knight challenges the students to a duel and waves his sword at them, but Harry asks if the knight will show them to the North Tower. The knight tries and fails to retrieve his pony and then leads them through paintings. When they reach the classroom, the knight introduces himself as Sir Cadogan and heads back to his painting.

The very existence of Sir Cadogan suggests that if Harry is willing to look, there are mentors and helpful individuals all throughout Hogwarts who can help him learn more about his world and his school. This begins to expand Harry's current, relatively narrow conception of who can be a mentor to an even broader swath of people (or paintings).



The class is assembled on a tiny landing and Ron points to a door in the ceiling. The door suddenly opens and a ladder emerges. Harry leads the class up and into the classroom. It's very warm with armchairs, poufs, and a pervasive sickly perfume. When everyone is in the classroom, Professor Trelawney moves into the light. She looks like a glittery insect and asks everyone to sit. She sits in an armchair and tells her class that being down with the rest of the school "clouds her Inner Eye."

The way that Trelawney speaks to her class and tries to create a sense of mystery and intrigue surrounding who she is shows her attempting to manipulate the students into finding her and her subject believable and interesting. Because Divination is something that relies more on individual talent than anything else, this is an attempt to legitimize the subject.



Trelawney warns them that if they don't have the Sight, they won't get far, and then asks Neville if his grandmother is well. As she begins to go through the subjects they'll cover, she also offers Parvati Patil a warning and says that around Easter, they'll lose a student forever. Trelawney asks Lavender Brown to pass her a teapot and tells her that whatever she's dreading will happen on October 16th. Then, she instructs the class to drink their tea and read their tealeaves, telling Neville to choose a blue cup after he breaks his first one. He promptly breaks a cup.

Harry and Ron exchange teacups after they drink their tea. Harry deciphers that Ron will suffer, but happily. They try to not let Trelawney see them giggle and then Ron studies Harry's cup. Ron sees an acorn, which means that Harry will come into money, and then a large animal. Suddenly, Trelawney grabs the cup. She sees an enemy, danger, and then, sinking into a chair, says that Harry has the Grim, an omen of death. Hermione insists that everyone knows that Harry has an enemy and says the shape doesn't look like a Grim. Trelawney tells Hermione that she doesn't perceive much of an aura around her.

Harry, Ron, and Hermione head for their Transfiguration lesson with McGonagall. Harry sits in the back of the room and feels as though everyone is looking at him. Nobody seems to listen to McGonagall talk about Animagi, wizards who can transform into animals, and nobody claps when she transforms into a cat. Turning back into a human, McGonagall asks what's going on. Hermione says that they just came from Divination and McGonagall cuts her off and asks who's going to die. Upon learning that Harry is supposed to die, McGonagall says that Trelawney predicts the death of a student every year, adds that Divination is imprecise, and tells Harry that if he dies, he doesn't need to hand in his homework.

After class, the Gryffindors head to the Great Hall for lunch. Hermione tells Ron to lighten up, but Ron drops his fork when Harry admits that he did see a big black dog after leaving the Dursleys. Hermione insists that the Grim isn't an omen and pulls out her Arithmancy book. When she deems Divination "woolly," Ron says she just doesn't like being bad at it. Hermione says that Arithmancy was amazing compared to Divination and stalks off. Ron frowns and points out to Harry that Hermione hasn't had an Arithmancy class yet.

These early predictions continue to make the class apprehensive of Trelawney and of the subject matter, which—for those who are truly interested—will make them take it even more seriously. When Neville breaks the cup as though on cue, it gives the students enough evidence to believe that Divination is something real and may be terrifying.



For Hermione, who takes education, facts, and rules very seriously, Divination appears silly and a waste of time—in her estimation and given what she knows of Neville, it was probably likely that Neville would break a cup whether Trelawney predicted it or not. This shows that for Hermione, Divination is just a matter of perspective and how people choose to perceive what they see and what happens in their lives.



Because McGonagall is a trusted (if strict) teacher and mentor, her assessment of divination helps everyone, especially Hermione, understand that it really is a matter of perspective. The fact that Trelawney predicts a student's death regularly and is never correct adds more weight to the interpretation that Trelawney is trying to scare her students into believing in Divination's truth.



Because Harry and Ron don't know that Hermione has already begun time traveling to make it to all her classes, it seems puzzling and strange when she insists she's been to Arithmancy. This illustrates how a person who isn't time traveling and doesn't know of its existence can be led to believe that a time traveler is just telling tales, rather than suspecting that there might be more to the story.



After lunch, Harry walks down to Hagrid's with Ron and Hermione for Care of Magical Creatures. Ron and Hermione aren't speaking, and to make matters worse, Harry realizes that the Gryffindors have this class with the Slytherins. Hagrid greets the class and then leads the students to a paddock. When he asks them to open their books, Malfoy coldly asks how. Harry sees that most of the class's books are tied shut and says that they need to stroke the books, demonstrating on Hermione's.

Hagrid seems less confident after this and walks away to fetch the creatures for the lesson. Malfoy loudly says that his father is going to be upset when he learns Hagrid is teaching. Harry tells him to stop but their spat is interrupted when Hagrid returns with a dozen strange creatures. He says they're hippogriffs, which are half-horse and half-eagle. Hagrid explains that hippogriffs are proud and it's dangerous to insult them, and then tells the students how to bow and wait for the hippogriff to bow back. Harry volunteers to go first.

Hagrid unties a hippogriff named Buckbeak and coaches Harry through bowing. To Harry's surprise, Buckbeak bows back and Hagrid tells Harry how to pat Buckbeak's beak. Then, Hagrid boosts Harry onto Buckbeak's back for a ride. Buckbeak takes Harry for a flying lap around the paddock and Harry thinks he prefers his broom. When Harry is on the ground again, Hagrid sets up the rest of the class with the hippogriffs. Malfoy, Crabbe, and Goyle work with Buckbeak. Buckbeak bows to Malfoy but when Malfoy calls him an "ugly brute," Buckbeak strikes and makes Malfoy bleed.

Hagrid carries Malfoy towards the castle as the rest of the class disbands. Harry assures Hermione that Malfoy will be fine. Ron is worried that this will ruin Hagrid's confidence. Hagrid isn't at dinner, which they find worrying. Though they try to do homework after dinner, when they see a light on at Hagrid's hut, they decide to go visit him. Hagrid and his dog, Fang, sit together; Hagrid is obviously drunk. He slurs but manages to explain that though Madam Pomfrey fixed Malfoy up, he still says he's in pain. Harry insists Malfoy is pretending.

Miserably, Hagrid says that the school governors know about the attack and says it's all his fault. Hermione and Harry assure him that Malfoy did this to himself—he wasn't listening to directions. Hagrid pulls Harry and Ron into a hug as Hermione dumps out Hagrid's tankard of mead. Hagrid follows her outside, dunks his head in the water barrel, and seems revived when he gets back inside. Suddenly, he yells at Harry that he shouldn't be wandering after dark and angrily escorts all three of them back to the castle.

Again, comparing the ways that Hagrid and the class think differently about their textbooks shows that interpretation is everything: the class's fear and exasperation about their violent books means that they're not excited about the class, while Hagrid is able to be excited about everything because he knows how to use the books.



Malfoy's insistence that his father isn't going to be happy about this suggests that Mr. Malfoy is relatively powerful. In other words, Malfoy knows that he also has power over Hagrid and the class because his father will be able to change things given his association with the Ministry. This is an early indication that there's corruption in the Ministry.



Remember that Hagrid told the class that insulting hippogriffs was dangerous. When Malfoy doesn't listen and insults Buckbeak anyway, it shows that he doesn't take Hagrid seriously as a teacher and because of this, can't learn and isn't safe in class. This suggests that there are major consequences to not accepting a teacher's authority; Malfoy's injuries are proof.



Ron's concern about Hagrid's confidence shows that though there is a power difference between him and Hagrid, he still understands that Hagrid is in need of supportive friends as much as anyone else. He's still vulnerable to Malfoy's bullying, especially since Malfoy has so much power given his father's position in the Ministry.



When Hagrid abruptly resumes his role as an authority figure, it shows how all the adults in Harry's life are doing their best to protect him while he's in danger. As unsuccessful as Hagrid's first lesson was, this indicates that he's still a valuable teacher and mentor who cares for his students and friends.



CHAPTER SEVEN

Malfoy remains in the hospital wing until Thursday morning, when he comes to Potions halfway through class. Snape idly tells Malfoy to settle down and Harry scowls; he knows that Malfoy is playing up his injury and that Snape would've yelled at him if he'd come in late. Malfoy sets up his cauldron next to Harry and Ron and asks Snape for help cutting his ingredients, since his arm is in a sling. Snape makes Harry and Ron help Malfoy, which gives Malfoy the opportunity to smirk, feel superior, and tell them that his father is going to get Hagrid fired.

At the next table, Neville struggles with his Shrinking Solution and his fear of Snape makes the subject even harder for him. His potion is supposed to be green, but Snape berates him when he notices that Neville's potion is orange. Snape tells Neville that they'll test his potion on his toad Trevor at the end of class and instructs Hermione to not help Neville.

Seamus asks Harry if he's heard—there's been a sighting of Sirius Black nearby. Malfoy gives Harry a mean look, asks Harry if he's planning on catching Black, and says that if he were in Harry's place, he'd be seeking revenge. Before Harry can make Malfoy explain what he means, Snape tells the class to clean up so they can test Neville's potion. Harry notices Hermione whispering instructions to Neville.

Snape calls the class to gather around Neville's cauldron. He gives Trevor a few drops of the potion and Trevor turns into a tadpole. Sourly, Snape administers the antidote and takes five points from Gryffindor since Hermione helped. Ron grouches about Snape as they walk to lunch but stops when he realizes that Hermione is no longer behind them. They see her hurrying towards them, and she insists she had to go back for something as her bag splits. Ron looks at the book she hands him and asks why she has it—it's not for a subject she has today.

Later, the Gryffindors sit in the Defense Against the Dark Arts classroom with quills and parchment ready. Lupin arrives, announces a practical lesson, and leads the class towards the staffroom. They run into Peeves the Poltergeist on the way, and Lupin shows the class a spell that sends the gum Peeves was stuffing in a keyhole into Peeves's nose. They find Snape in the staffroom. As Snape starts to leave, he warns Lupin to not trust Neville with difficult tasks unless he has Hermione to help him. Mildly, Lupin says he'd actually like Neville to help him with their first exercise. Neville turns red as Snape leaves.

Harry's side note about the way that Snape would treat him indicates that Snape doesn't treat his students impartially. This begins to set Snape up as a bad teacher and an unethical one at that, as playing favorites means that Malfoy may not be held to a high enough standard while Harry will have to work twice as hard to learn anything.



Berating students also shows that Snape is an awful teacher, while suggesting they test the potion on Trevor shows that Snape is cruel and doesn't care about Neville or his pets. By forbidding Hermione from helping, he also tries to ensure that Neville will fail.



It's telling that Harry thinks twice when Malfoy indicates that there's something more to the Sirius Black story than Harry knows already. It suggests that Harry isn't willing to question adults—he trusts them—but because he doesn't trust Malfoy, everything he says is worth scrutinizing.



Again, Snape clearly prioritizes making Neville feel horrible. He abuses his power instead of actually teaching his students anything about potions—or for that matter, praising the students that do understand the material and are capable of helping others. With this, Snape turns his classroom into a place that isn't safe and where nobody can learn.



Nobody likes Peeves, so this spell is a surefire way for Lupin to start building rapport with his students and show them that he's on their side. Lupin continues this endeavor when he so calmly defends Neville to Professor Snape. This suggests that Lupin knows how Snape likely treats students in his classroom, and that he sees it as his responsibility to undo some of the damage that Snape is doing.



Lupin leads the class to a wardrobe and explains that there's a boggart inside. Hermione defines a boggart as a shape-shifter that takes the shape of whatever scares a person most, and Harry says that the class has an advantage because there's so many of them, the boggart might not know what shape to take. Lupin leads the class through a defensive charm, "riddikulus," and then asks Neville to join him. Neville nervously tells Lupin that he fears Snape more than anything, and then with prompting, tells Lupin about the clothes his grandmother wears. Lupin instructs Neville to think of his grandmother's clothes while he says the charm, and Snape the boggart will be forced into Neville's grandmother's clothes.

Lupin asks the rest of the class to think of what scares them the most and how to make it funny, as they'll take on the boggart in turn. Harry first thinks of Voldemort but realizes he fears the [dementors](#) more. Lupin begins the exercise before Harry is ready. Neville successfully forces the boggart Snape into a ridiculous dress and hat. Several other classmates tackle the boggart but before Harry has a chance, Lupin steps in. The boggart turns into a white orb, and Lupin asks Neville to finish the boggart. After Snape once again ends up in Neville's grandmother's clothes, the boggart explodes. Lupin gives out points and assigns homework. Harry leaves the class feeling sad. He wonders why Lupin didn't let him tackle the boggart and wonders what Lupin thinks of him.

The fact that Neville's greatest fear is Professor Snape reinforces just how poor a teacher Snape is, since Neville doesn't fear him just because he's not good at Potions. It's possible that Neville could be passably good at Potions if Snape didn't terrorize him so much, which suggests that it's Snape's fault alone that Neville is so bad at his class. This exercise with the boggart allows Neville to face his fears in a safe, supportive environment, thereby encouraging him to trust Lupin.



When Neville so perfectly fights the boggart a second time, it shows what a little bit of confidence from a good teacher can do: this is a full turnaround from Neville's performance in Potions, with a teacher who thinks little of him. Harry's fear that Lupin thinks poorly of him or doesn't think he's capable suggests that Harry understands that at Hogwarts, he can't trust that teachers will actually treat him fairly—Snape is proof of that.



CHAPTER EIGHT

Defense Against the Dark Arts soon becomes everyone's favorite class. Potions, however, gets even worse for Neville once the story of Snape's appearance as a boggart gets around. Harry hates Divination the most, as Trelawney starts to cry every time she sees him. Nobody enjoys Care of Magical Creatures much, as Hagrid decides to teach the class to care for boring flobberworms. Fortunately, in October, Quidditch practice starts in earnest. Oliver Wood, the Gryffindor captain, holds a meeting one evening to tell the team that this is his last chance to win the Quidditch Cup before he leaves school.

When Snape actively starts to take revenge against Neville for what happened with the boggart, it indicates that Snape has no business teaching—he's not at all fair and cannot empathize with his students. Notice too that when Hagrid loses his confidence, the entire class suffers. This offers two ends of an extreme: while Snape can't teach because he's too confident, Hagrid can't teach (but isn't malicious) because he has no confidence.



One evening, Harry returns to the common room after practice to find everyone excited. Ron explains that the school announced the first Hogsmeade outing on Halloween and Harry throws himself into a chair. Ron suggests that Harry ask McGonagall for permission, while Hermione disapprovingly tells Harry to stay at school. Crookshanks interrupts the conversation by leaping into Hermione's lap with a dead spider. Ron tells Hermione to control Crookshanks, as Scabbers is asleep in Ron's bag. Without warning, Crookshanks leaps at the bag. Ron swings the bag around, sending Scabbers flying out the top. Crookshanks pursues Scabbers until Scabbers finds refuge under a chest and Hermione manages to catch the cat. Furious, Ron yells at Hermione and then stalks off to the dormitory.

Ron barely speaks to Hermione in Herbology the next day. When the class lines up later for Transfiguration, Harry notices Lavender Brown crying. Hermione asks Lavender what's wrong, and Lavender explains that Trelawney's prediction came true—it's the 16th of October, and she just got news that her rabbit died. Hesitantly, Hermione points out that Lavender only got the news today; the rabbit didn't die today, and Lavender wasn't dreading his death. Ron says loudly that Hermione doesn't care about other people's pets.

At the end of Transfiguration, McGonagall reminds the class to hand in their Hogsmeade permission forms. Harry approaches her desk and asks for permission to go. McGonagall apologizes and says that she can't sign. In the hallway, Ron calls McGonagall names while Hermione looks as though it's for the best. Ron tries to cheer Harry up by reminding him of the Halloween feast, but it doesn't work. To make matters worse, even Percy admits that Hogsmeade is fun.

On Halloween, Harry feels very morose. Ron and Hermione even put aside their argument over Crookshanks to promise to bring Harry candy from Honeydukes. Malfoy taunts Harry about the [dementors](#) as Harry walks Ron and Hermione to the door and then wanders around the castle. He decides to visit Hedwig when he hears Lupin call his name. When Lupin ascertains that Harry is the only student not in Hogsmeade, he invites Harry into his office to see the class's next creature. He offers Harry tea and, with a twinkle, suggests that Harry has probably had enough of tealeaves. McGonagall informed him of Trelawney's prediction and he asks Harry if he's worried. Harry tells Lupin he's not, but decides not to tell him about the dog in Magnolia Crescent.

While Ron has every right to be protective of his pet, he could also benefit from understanding that cats chase rats and it's part of their nature. In this way, what's happening here is no different than Buckbeak striking Malfoy when Malfoy insulted him. This indicates that, because Ron has such a personal connection to Scabbers, he's unable to take this wider view that cuts animals more slack for acting in accordance with their species.



Hermione's unwillingness to accept Trelawney's prediction as fact suggests that Hermione trusts her own version of events and her own interpretations over those of someone who, to her, looks like a fraud. This shows that she doesn't think of Trelawney as an authority figure in the same way that she thinks of McGonagall or Dumbledore as being authority figures—she trusts what they say and takes them at their word.



The fact that all Harry really wants is to go on a class trip with his friends reminds the reader that for all Harry's other problems, he's still a thirteen-year-old boy before he's anything else. His inability to see Hermione's point of view or take Sirius Black's threat seriously reinforces his youth and lack of maturity.



By inviting Harry in for tea, Professor Lupin begins to move their relationship towards one that's more personal. In doing so, Lupin shows Harry even more that he's someone who can be trusted, while his attitude and comment about Trelawney further discredit Divination as a subject. When Harry thinks of the dog in Magnolia Crescent, it shows that on some level, he is taking Trelawney's prediction seriously, as he appears to believe that the dog is the Grim.



Lupin asks Harry if there's something wrong, so Harry asks why he wasn't allowed to fight the boggart. He's surprised when Lupin doesn't deny it; Lupin explains that he didn't think Voldemort appearing in the staff room would be a good idea. Harry admits that he's more scared of **dementors** than Voldemort, which impresses Lupin—he says that this means Harry fears fear, and asks if Harry's been thinking that Lupin didn't think him capable of fighting the boggart.

Snape knocks on the door and lets himself in. He gives Lupin a smoking goblet, tells him to drink it now, and Harry notices a strange look on Snape's face. After Snape leaves, Lupin explains that he's been feeling a bit off and this potion is the only thing that helps. He praises Snape's skill as he drinks the concoction. Harry feels tempted to knock the goblet away and says that it's rumored that Snape is willing to do anything to get the Defense Against the Dark Arts job. Lupin expresses little interest in this.

That evening, Ron dumps an armful of candy in Harry's lap and then he and Hermione tell Harry all about their Hogsmeade adventure. Hermione and Ron are aghast when Harry tells them about the potion that Lupin drank, and they wonder if Snape is trying to poison him. During the Halloween feast, the trio watches Lupin and Snape closely, but Lupin looks normal and Snape looks only a little on edge.

After the feast, Harry, Ron, and Hermione head back to Gryffindor Tower, but the hallway in front of the Fat Lady's portrait is unusually packed with students. Percy pushes to the front but drops his pompous attitude when he gets to the portrait hole. He sends for Dumbledore, who arrives nearly instantly, and Harry finally sees that the Fat Lady's portrait has been destroyed. Just as Dumbledore asks McGonagall to find Filch, Peeves floats overhead and cackles with delight. He says that the Fat Lady is hiding on the fourth floor and that Sirius Black destroyed her portrait when she wouldn't let him in.

CHAPTER NINE

Dumbledore summons the entire school to the Great Hall. He announces that the students will sleep there while teachers search the castle, and he conjures sleeping bags. Percy shouts that the lights will go out in ten minutes, so Harry, Ron, and Hermione drag sleeping bags into a corner. Hermione and Ron note that they're lucky Sirius Black tried to break in tonight, since nobody was in the tower for him to hurt. They hear a Ravenclaw suggesting that Black Apparated into the castle, which annoys Hermione: according to *Hogwarts: A History*, a person can't Apparate in, and the **dementors** see through disguises.

The fact that Lupin tells Harry the truth shows that he believes his students deserve to be treated like adults and have their concerns taken seriously. When Harry is surprised that Lupin does tell the truth, it shows that up to this point, Harry has been able to expect that adults will keep things from him and treat him like a child.



Note that throughout the series, it's common knowledge for everyone—students and staff alike—that Snape wants to teach Defense Against the Dark Arts. This suggests that Harry isn't telling Lupin anything he doesn't already know, while Harry's suspicion indicates that he believes he knows more than the adults around him.



The thought that Snape is trying to poison Lupin is of course absurd, but it's easy to see why the trio would suspect this given how Snape treats them and how he seems to treat Lupin—though it is a huge leap to go from poisoning students' pets to hurting fellow teachers.



The fact that the Fat Lady refused to let Sirius Black in shows how seriously she takes her job and her role as protector of the Gryffindor students. Again, this shows Harry that there are more people than he ever imagined at Hogwarts who are willing to help and protect him. In this case, even Peeves seems willing to play along and act like he's a good guy.



Keep in mind that Sirius Black isn't actually after Harry and doesn't want to murder him. With this information, it becomes clear that Black specifically chose to sneak in tonight when there was nobody there, as people aren't his goal. Hermione's derision about the Ravenclaw student shows that she believes that what she reads in books is entirely true and doesn't question information when it comes from that kind of a source.



At about three in the morning, Dumbledore finds Percy near Harry, Ron, and Hermione. They pretend to sleep so they can listen. Dumbledore whispers to Percy that he's found a temporary guardian for the portrait hole, and Snape arrives to say that Sirius Black is nowhere to be found. Snape asks if Dumbledore has any theories as to how Black got in, and reminds Dumbledore of a conversation they had in which Snape expressed "concerns." Dumbledore, in a tone of finality, says that nobody in the castle would've helped Black get in. Percy asks if the **dementors** wanted to help search the castle, but Dumbledore replies that dementors won't enter the castle while he's around.

Over the next few days, the rumors about Sirius Black get wilder and wilder. Sir Cadogan replaces the Fat Lady, which annoys all the Gryffindors—he changes passwords all the time and challenges people to duels. Much to Harry's annoyance, teachers start to walk with him in the corridors and Percy trails him as well. Then, McGonagall summons Harry to tell him first that Black is after him, and second that she doesn't think Harry should be practicing Quidditch in the evenings. Harry is distraught, but McGonagall agrees to let him practice if Madam Hooch supervises.

A few days before the first Quidditch match, Oliver tells the team that they won't play Slytherin as planned since Malfoy is still "injured." They'll play Hufflepuff instead. He's worried because their new captain and Seeker, Cedric Diggory, is very good. At the mention of Diggory, Angelina, Alicia, and Katie giggle that he's handsome. Oliver is distraught, but Fred assures him they'll take Hufflepuff seriously. Oliver tries to talk strategy to Harry every chance he gets over the next few days. This makes Harry late to Defense Against the Dark Arts.

Snape greets Harry instead of Lupin, docks points from Gryffindor for Harry's lateness, and explains that Lupin is ill. He tells the class that Lupin's lesson plans are disorganized and tells Hermione to be quiet when she lists the creatures they've already studied. Both Dean and Parvati try to help Hermione and defend Lupin, but Snape menacingly tells the class to turn to the chapter on werewolves. Nobody except Hermione raises their hand when he asks how to distinguish between a werewolf and an actual wolf and when Hermione tries to answer, Snape docks more points because she's "an insufferable know-it-all." Ron asks why Snape even asked the question, which earns him detention, and they spend the rest of class silently making notes on werewolves. At the end, he asks for a long essay on werewolves, due Monday.

Dumbledore's reply to Snape implies that Snape thinks someone is helping Black enter the castle, which shows that Snape is just as suspicious of people as Harry, Ron, and Hermione are of him. Remember though that in the Shrieking Shack, Lupin will admit that he did inadvertently help Black by keeping it secret that he's an Animagus. However, because the trio distrusts Snape, they won't take him seriously here even though, in a way, he's right to be suspicious of Lupin.



When she insists that Harry be under adult supervision at all times, McGonagall shows that she takes her responsibility as a teacher and as Harry's Head of House very seriously. In the same vein, it's also worth noting that while McGonagall's lessons are hard, it's implied that, like Lupin, she has reasonable lesson plans. This suggests that being a good teacher and a caring teacher go hand in hand.



Because Malfoy is able to create the reality that works for him (by pretending his arm still hurts), he's able to change how events happen in a very meaningful way. This again reminds the reader of the power that some people have to turn things into reality, even when that "reality" isn't actually real at all.



When the class chooses to stand up to Snape, it shows that Lupin's teaching and the way he treats them has given them confidence to stand up for themselves and advocate for their education. Further, when Snape calls Hermione names, it shows again that he cares little for his students and cares only for his own agenda. While Snape's choice to teach the class about werewolves seems a strange one, Harry and Ron learn later that he's actually trying to tip them off about Lupin—he's trying to give the class information that would effectively discredit their teacher.



The next morning, Harry wakes early to a draft on his neck—Peeves is blowing in his ear. Peeves zooms away, cackling, and Harry decides to get up. He stops Crookshanks from entering the dormitory and listens to the noisy storm outside. As Harry thinks of Cedric Diggory, who is much heavier than Harry is, he begins to feel apprehensive—Diggory is less likely to be blown off course. Finally, Harry heads down to the locker rooms with the team.

Harry worries he won't be able to see, as the rain covers his glasses. The wind is so loud that he can't even hear Madam Hooch tell the players to mount their brooms and start flying. Harry is frozen within minutes. He lands when Oliver waves at him; Oliver tells him to get the Snitch soon. Hermione appears as though on cue and puts a charm on Harry's glasses so they repel water. The lightning and thunder get worse and as lightning lights up the stands, Harry sees an enormous dog. He nearly falls off his broom but refocuses on the game when Oliver yells and points to Diggory, who's chasing the Snitch.

As Harry chases Diggory, he notices the noise of the storm diminishing and suddenly feels a familiar sense of cold. He looks down and sees a hundred **dementors** below him. Harry hears a woman screaming and thinks he needs to help her as he starts to fall. He comes to in the hospital wing listening to his teammates talk about things that make no sense. Harry opens his eyes and asks what happened.

Fred and Angelina explain that Harry fell off his broom, and George says that Diggory caught the Snitch right after. Diggory tried to demand a rematch when he realized Harry had fallen, but even Oliver agrees that Hufflepuff won fairly. Fred and George talk through Gryffindor's chances of winning the Cup and then Madam Pomfrey kicks the team out. Hermione and Ron stay and tell Harry that Dumbledore was furious with the **dementors**. Harry is barely listening; he's thinking about the screaming in his head. Harry asks about his broom, and Hermione and Ron hesitantly tell him that it blew into the Whomping Willow. Hermione dumps broom pieces onto Harry's bed.

CHAPTER TEN

Madam Pomfrey keeps Harry over the weekend. He spends his time mourning his broken broomstick and seeing visitors, though nobody is able to make him feel better. Harry doesn't tell anyone about the Grim and keeps quiet about what happens to him when the dementors get close—Harry knows now that he hears Lily screaming and Voldemort laughing as he murders her.

Because Harry is able to look objectively at his strengths compared to Cedric Diggory's, he's then able to come up with a plan to make the game easier for himself. In this way, having more information means that Harry can more clearly see what's going on and deal with what's happening.



Hermione's charm on Harry's glasses brings the novel's exploration of perspective into the real world: she literally makes it so that Harry can see. However, Harry's still not seeing the truth—his fear at seeing the dog suggests he thinks it's the Grim still, when in reality, the dog is Sirius Black, a friend. In this case, the extra information actually has negative consequences.



Harry's desire to help the woman he hears screaming shows that he cares deeply for others and wants to do what he can to protect people from pain and suffering. When he faints after this thought, it indicates that his altruism can also have negative consequences.



Diggory's attempts to organize a rematch offer the novel's first suggestion that true justice can really only come from individuals, not large groups or the government. While everyone agrees that this is unnecessary in this situation, this introduces Harry to the idea that individuals have the power to change things and make things right.



The fact that Harry hears his mother dying suggests that time and his memories of what happened aren't as distant as Harry might have thought. This shows that the dementors' true power is condensing time and filtering a person's conception of time to leave them with only the bad moments.



Harry is relieved to get back to normal life on Monday, though Malfoy taunts Harry by imitating Harry falling off during the match and, during Potions, he mimes **dementors**. Ron throws a crocodile heart at him and Snape takes 50 points from Gryffindor. Fortunately, Lupin is back to teach Defense Against the Dark Arts, though he looks ill still. As soon as the class is seated they start complaining about Snape and their werewolf homework. Lupin smiles and excuses them from the essay; only Hermione is disappointed.

Lupin asks Harry to stay after class. He offers condolences for Harry's broomstick and sighs that the Whomping Willow was planted the year he arrived at Hogwarts and is a vicious tree. Harry asks if Lupin heard about the **dementors** and then asks why the dementors affect him so much. Lupin tells Harry that he's not weak; he just has a darker past than most. He explains that dementors are foul creatures that drain positivity out of the world. If given the chance, a dementor will feed on a person's happiness and leave them with only the worst experiences of their life. Quietly, Harry admits that the dementors make him hear Voldemort murdering Lily.

Lupin awkwardly almost touches Harry's shoulder and then curtly says that the **dementors** are getting angry since Dumbledore won't let them on the grounds. He says that at Azkaban, which is on an island, the dementors are so successful that the prison barely needs walls or water to keep prisoners in—most of them go mad. Harry and Lupin briefly discuss Sirius Black's escape, and then Harry remembers that Lupin was able to deter the dementor on the train. He asks if Lupin will teach him to fight dementors. Lupin agrees, but says they need to wait until the new year.

This promise, combined with Hufflepuff losing to Ravenclaw in a Quidditch match, makes Harry feel much better. Two weeks before term ends, it begins to snow and feel like Christmas. Both Ron and Hermione decide to stay at Hogwarts over the Christmas holidays, and everyone but Harry is thrilled when the school arranges another Hogsmeade trip for the last weekend of term. Harry decides to spend the day researching broomsticks to replace his Nimbus.

For Hermione, not doing assigned homework—even if it is from Snape and not fair—is unthinkable. This is because she still believes in the sanctity of adult authority figures and while she's willing to question Snape on a personal level, she's unwilling to go so far as to challenge him as a teacher in charge of her grades.



Everything about this conversation suggests that Lupin is beginning to take on a mentorship role for Harry, while Harry is learning to trust Lupin even with extremely personal information. Again, Lupin's willingness to give Harry unabridged information about the dementors shows that he believes Harry is both mature enough to hear the truth and deserving of hearing it. This shows that he recognizes that Harry is growing up.



The way that Lupin describes the prison suggests that happiness and camaraderie are essential if a person wants to remain truly alive, since dementors deprive a person of both of those things. When Harry asks for help in learning to deter the dementors, it again shows that he trusts Lupin and knows that Lupin will tell him the truth and treat this request fairly.



Ron and Hermione's decision to stay at school is intended to make Harry feel less alone, especially since he has no other choice of where to go for the holidays. This shows that gestures of friendship don't have to be grand; they can be as small as simply being there for someone.



On the morning of the Hogsmeade trip, Harry walks Ron and Hermione to the doors but before he can return to Gryffindor Tower, Fred and George wave him into an empty classroom. Fred pulls out an old piece of parchment and George explains that when they were first-years, they got in trouble with Filch. While he was threatening them, they noticed a cabinet labeled "Confiscated and Highly Dangerous." George set off a Dungbomb and Fred grabbed the parchment out of the cabinet. George taps the parchment and says, "I solemnly swear that I am up to no good." A map of Hogwarts appears. The top reads that Moony, Wormtail, Padfoot, and Prongs present the Marauder's Map.

Harry looks at it and sees that throughout the castle, there are dots labeled with names. It also shows a number of secret passages into Hogsmeade. Fred points out several that Filch knows about, one that starts under the Whomping Willow, and one that leads into Honeydukes. The entrance is right outside the classroom they're in. They tell Harry how to clear the map and say that they'll see him at Honeydukes. Harry feels excited until he remembers that once, Mr. Weasley warned him to not trust something that can think if he can't see where its brain is. He reasons that he's not using it for anything too bad, so he consults the map, which tells him how to open the hump of a stone witch outside the classroom, and climbs in.

Harry slides down a long slide and then follows a dark passageway. He begins to climb stairs until his head hits a door. He slowly climbs into a cellar and as an employee comes down to fetch a box of Jelly Slugs, Harry sneaks up the stairs and into the shop. He finds Ron and Hermione, surprises them, and then tells them about the map. Ron is enraged that Fred and George never gave it to him, while Hermione insists that Harry hand the map in. She thinks that Sirius Black might be using the passages and Harry wonders if Black knows about the passage to Honeydukes. Ron, however, points to a notice saying that [dementors](#) patrol the streets of Hogsmeade at night and says that Black doesn't stand a chance.

Harry, Ron, and Hermione walk through the village and decide to get butterbeer in the Three Broomsticks. Blushing at the sight of the bartender, Madam Rosmerta, Ron goes to fetch drinks. The trio sits at a table in the back next to a Christmas tree. Just as Ron returns with the butterbeer, they see McGonagall, Flitwick, Hagrid, and Fudge walk through the door. Hermione and Ron shove Harry under the table, while Hermione moves the Christmas tree in front of their table. Harry watches the adults sit at the table next to theirs through the branches.

It's important to keep in mind that Fred and George take a very dim view of "justice" as espoused by those in charge of Hogwarts, like Filch. As far as they're concerned, what Filch says is less meaningful or important than whatever disallowed thing they want to do. This shows Harry that it is possible to put himself above the law and work around it, while this map is implied to be the ticket to doing so.



Mr. Weasley uttered that phrase in reference to Tom Riddle/Voldemort's diary, which was an evil object and, importantly, was something that only Ginny interacted with. In the case of the Marauder's Map, it's telling that both Fred and George use it, and that they choose to pass it on to Harry. Simply because the map has been handled by so many people, it seems less nefarious than the diary did—and it's also telling that it was created by four people, not one.



It's worth noting that Ron is right—Black is, at this point, hiding in the Forbidden Forest, not in Hogsmeade. It's perfectly logical to expect that Black wouldn't be able to sneak into the Honeydukes tunnel without raising suspicion. This shows that at least in times like this, when Ron's happiness is at stake, he's able to think logically and critically and come to reasonable conclusions given the information in front of him.



By keeping Harry from being seen by the teachers, Ron and Hermione ensure that he (and they as well) won't get into trouble for sneaking out. This ensures that Harry will be able to use the Marauder's Map again and that he'll have his friends to thank for that. However, it's also worth noting that Harry's trip to Hogsmeade does ignore its potential dangers; he's still young and naïve.



Harry watches Rosmerta's feet as she brings drinks to the table and Fudge invites her to join them. Fudge is in town because of Sirius Black and assures Rosmerta that the **dementors** are a necessary precaution. McGonagall and Flitwick both express anger that they want to get inside the school, but Fudge delicately sidesteps. Thoughtfully, Rosmerta says that she knew Sirius as a boy and he never seemed the sort to go to the Dark Side. Fudge and McGonagall ask if she remembers Sirius's best friend, James Potter. At this, Harry drops his tankard.

McGonagall, Flitwick, and Fudge tell Rosmerta that James trusted Sirius—Sirius was his best man and is Harry's godfather. Fudge says that when the Potters went into hiding, Dumbledore suggested they use the Fidelius Charm, which hides a secret inside a single person. Black became the Potters' Secret Keeper, though Dumbledore was concerned that someone close to the Potters was working with Voldemort. Within a week Black betrayed his friends, which backfired when Harry destroyed Voldemort.

At this, Hagrid begins to shout and says that he was the last person to see Sirius, at the Potters' house when he went to fetch Harry. Sirius had asked for Harry and when Hagrid insisted on following Dumbledore's orders, Sirius lent Hagrid his flying motorbike. Fudge continues the story and says that Peter Pettigrew found Sirius before the Ministry did. Rosmerta remembers Pettigrew as an untalented follower of James and Sirius. Pettigrew found Sirius on the street and Sirius blew him and the street up, and then laughed.

Rosmerta asks if Sirius Black is actually mad, and Fudge says he's not sure. The last time he was at Azkaban, Black seemed normal and asked for Fudge's paper. Fudge says that they just hope to catch him before he finds Voldemort. With this, the teachers decide to head back to Hogwarts.

When Fudge sidesteps McGonagall and Flitwick's concerns, it shows that he believes the dementors are good and necessary, even if they are dangerous. McGonagall's concerns, however, suggest that she prioritizes her students' safety over anything else. Learning that James was friends with Sirius Black tells Harry that adults are keeping things from him.



The implication that it's been purposefully kept secret that Black is Harry's godfather suggests that the adults knew that Harry would become far more emotional about the whole thing knowing that Black betrayed his parents. What the adults believe also shows that they can easily follow Ministry policy without having all the information.



Given what Harry learns in the Shrieking Shack, it becomes clear that Pettigrew used people's opinion of him as an untalented follower to his advantage—it made it look even more like Black murdered him in cold blood, and that he was trying to do the right thing by standing up to Black. This shows that he expertly manipulated the high emotions of the time.



By questioning Black's mental state, Fudge is forced to accept that the dementors might not be as successful as he'd like to think they are, since he and others imply that the whole point is for prisoners to go mad.



CHAPTER ELEVEN

As Harry runs back through the tunnel to Hogwarts, he wonders why nobody told him that his parents died because their best friend betrayed them. Hermione and Ron keep a nervous eye on Harry until after dinner, when Harry excuses himself early to go to bed. He digs in his cabinet until he finds the photo album that Hagrid made him. Harry finds a photo of Lily and James's wedding and notices Black as their best man. Harry thinks that Black doesn't have to hear Lily screaming whenever the **dementors** get close, slams the album closed, and crawls into bed. When Ron comes up moments later, Harry pretends to be asleep. Harry lies awake for hours, feeling as though his anger at Black is like poison.

To the reader, it makes more sense that nobody told Harry the "truth" about Black because they knew he'd react this way. He and Ron already have a reputation for getting into trouble, and chasing after an escaped criminal sounds exactly like something they'd try to do. This shows that the adults in Harry's life understand how to filter what he hears and control his perspective to try to keep him safe from harm.



Harry wakes up close to lunchtime the next day and finds Ron and Hermione in the common room. Hermione tells Harry that no matter what he heard, he can't do anything stupid. Incensed, Harry tells them that he hears Lily screaming when the dementors get near, and now that he knows who's responsible, he wants revenge. Hermione looks panicked as Harry says that Malfoy has known about this all along, but Ron points out that Malfoy would love it if Harry got destroyed like Pettigrew.

Ron and Hermione's choice to confront Harry about his anger shows that, like the adults around them, they're also aware that Harry is prone to following his emotions instead of logic or the promise of safety. This shows that, in this way, they're capable of behaving more maturely than he is, if only because their emotions aren't quite so high.



Ron tries to change the subject by suggesting they go visit Hagrid and Harry jumps at the idea, as he can ask Hagrid why he never mentioned Black. Hagrid doesn't answer when they knock and Ron hears a strange noise inside. When they call for Hagrid he finally opens the door in tears and flings himself at Harry. Harry, Ron, and Hermione guide Hagrid to a chair, and Hagrid motions towards an official letter on the table. Harry reads it aloud; it's from the school governors, who have decided to refer Hagrid and Buckbeak's case to the Committee for the Disposal of Dangerous Creatures. Ron insists that Buckbeak will get off and Harry notices that Buckbeak is inside.

Ron's remark that Buckbeak is innocent shows that he still trusts that, with proper preparation and witness testimony, Buckbeak can win his case. This represents a belief in the goodness and righteousness of the Ministry of Magic that they'll soon realize is unfounded: the Committee for the Disposal of Dangerous Creatures is controlled by Lucius Malfoy, and it cares little for the facts of the case.



Hermione says that they should be able to put up a good defense, but Hagrid cries that the Committee members are Lucius Malfoy's cronies and Dumbledore is too busy to help. Harry can't bring himself to mention Black, so he suggests that he can help Hagrid prepare for the case. After Ron makes tea, Hagrid starts to calm down, though he says that nobody likes his classes and the **dementors** make him feel terrible. This is the first time Hagrid has ever spoken about his time in Azkaban. When Hermione points out that Hagrid was innocent, he says that the dementors don't care.

Again, Hermione's insistence that they can win the case if only they prepare is predicated on a belief that the justice system is fair and unbiased—which, given that Lucius Malfoy controls this committee, it's clearly not. Hagrid's comment about the dementors mirrors this, given that the dementors also don't care about innocence—they'll suck the life out of anyone, innocent or otherwise.



After their visit, Harry, Ron, and Hermione devote themselves to helping Hagrid prepare for the hearing. They work almost nonstop until Christmas, when Harry and Ron wake to find sweaters and sweets from Mrs. Weasley. Harry also has a long, thin package and opens it to discover a Firebolt. There's no card and the boys wonder who sent it. Hermione arrives with Crookshanks and when she learns that the broom came without a note, she's not excited. Before she and Ron can argue, Crookshanks leaps at Ron and Scabbers. Ron tries to kick at Crookshanks but kicks Harry's trunk instead, which reinvigorates the Pocket Sneakoscope. Hermione huffs out of the room while Harry puts the Sneakoscope away.

When the Sneakoscope goes off again, it's doing so because of Scabbers. Ron's insistence that Scabbers is a victim, however, keeps him from being willing to question who around him might be untrustworthy. This reminds the reader that, because the trio doesn't have enough information to make truly informed decisions and assessments, they're missing clues right and left that could lead them towards a better understanding of the events taking place around them.



Harry notices that Scabbers looks awful and thinks that he's likely not going to live much longer. Hermione and Ron refuse to speak to each other all day. When they go to the Great Hall for lunch, they discover a single table in the middle of the room for the few teachers and students still at school for Christmas. Dumbledore greets everyone warmly, makes Snape hold one end of his Christmas cracker, and puts on the ridiculous hat that comes out of it. Harry and Ron smile when they see that the hat has a vulture on it, just like the hat that boggart Snape wore.

As the group begins to eat, Trelawney comes into the Great Hall. Dumbledore draws up a chair for her, but Trelawney refuses to sit down since she'd be the thirteenth guest. With McGonagall's prodding, Trelawney finally sits, looking as though she expects something to go wrong. She and McGonagall heatedly discuss Lupin's absence and Trelawney's "inner eye," but Dumbledore stops them by saying that Lupin is ill again. He confirms that Snape made Lupin his potion and then offers a first-year boy a plate of sausages.

Two hours later, Ron and Harry get up from the table at the same time. Trelawney shrieks and asks who stood up first, but McGonagall drily says that the boys will be fine unless there's a murderer in the hallway. Hermione stays behind as Harry and Ron head back to the common room to admire the Firebolt. A few minutes later, Hermione and McGonagall both come through the portrait hole. McGonagall takes the broom and tells Harry that she has to confiscate it to test it for jinxes. Ron and Harry are aghast, but McGonagall carries the broom away. Ron turns on Hermione and asks why she told. Hermione defiantly says that she believes that Sirius Black sent the broomstick.

CHAPTER TWELVE

Though Harry knows Hermione was trying to help, he's still angry with her. Ron is furious. Hermione begins avoiding the common room and Harry and Ron do nothing to try to make her come back. Right before term starts, Oliver finds Harry to ask about his progress on the [dementors](#) and on ordering a new broom. When he learns that McGonagall confiscated Harry's brand new Firebolt, Oliver isn't at all concerned that Black is out to get Harry and promises to talk to McGonagall.

Hermione and Ron's tiff still looks childish and silly, which reminds the reader that the trio still has a long ways to go in their journey toward maturity. When Dumbledore makes Snape participate in the Christmas cracker, he attempts to humanize Snape for the students in attendance and show them a side of Snape they wouldn't otherwise see.



The fact that Dumbledore knows about the potion that Snape is making for Lupin should tell Harry, Ron, and Hermione that there's nothing nefarious going on—they trust Dumbledore, and Dumbledore has encouraged them in the past to trust him about Snape and his other hiring decisions.



Hermione's actions should be commended here, as she acted to make sure that Harry stayed safe at a time when most people believe that Harry isn't safe at all. She knew that Harry and Ron would be upset with her, but she acted anyway. Per the novel's portrayal of friendship, this is one of the most powerful things friends can do for one another, and it's a mark of maturity for Hermione that she did this. On the other hand, Harry and Ron's anger looks shockingly immature in comparison.



Harry at least understands why Hermione did what she did, which suggests that he'll be able to forgive her more easily than Ron, who still hasn't fully forgiven Hermione for Crookshanks's constant attempts on Scabbers' life. This indicates that, in terms of maturity, Ron has the most progress to make of the three.



The next day, Hagrid teaches an enjoyable lesson on salamanders that love fire, while Trelawney introduces palmistry and tells Harry his life line is very short. After Defense Against the Dark Arts, Harry asks Lupin if they can start their anti-dementor lessons. Lupin asks Harry to meet him Thursday evening. As Harry and Ron head for dinner, Ron remarks that Lupin still looks unwell and wonders what's wrong with him. They hear Hermione behind them and she says it's obvious what's wrong. Ron won't indulge her and after she walks off, he tells Harry that she's just trying to get them to talk to her.

On Thursday evening, Harry meets Lupin in the History of Magic classroom. Lupin brings a suitcase containing a boggart. Harry tries to hide his apprehension as Lupin tells him about the Patronus charm, which conjures a positive force that a dementor can feed on. To conjure it, a wizard must think of a happy memory and say, "Expecto Patronum." Harry thinks of his first time on a broomstick and something silvery and wispy comes out of his wand. As Lupin opens the case, Harry tries to think of flying. He shouts the incantation and as he passes out, he hears Lily pleading with Voldemort.

Harry jerks back awake on the floor, apologizes, and accepts Lupin's proffered Chocolate Frog. As he eats it, he mutters that he heard Lily and Voldemort louder this time, and when Lupin suggests they call it a night, Harry insists he has to learn to fight the dementors. Lupin suggests that Harry choose a stronger memory, so Harry thinks of winning the House Cup last year. This time, Harry hears James telling Lily to take Harry and run. When he comes to, Harry is crying. Lupin admits that he was friends with James and says that the charm is too advanced.

Harry insists on trying again and settles on the memory of learning he was a wizard. Lupin opens the case, Harry shouts the incantation, and though he still hears Lily screaming, it's quieter. A shadow bursts out of Harry's wand and after a few seconds, Lupin shouts "Riddikulus" and the boggart dementor vanishes. Lupin praises Harry, gives him a huge bar of chocolate, and asks Harry to come again next week. Before Harry leaves, he asks Lupin if he also knew Sirius Black. Lupin looks suspicious, but just says that he didn't know Black as well as he thought he did.

Note that Ron never considers that Hermione might actually be right—and indeed, she reveals later that she does know what's ailing Lupin. This illustrates how Ron's heightened emotions make him unwilling to listen to or consider any perspectives other than his own, as the most important thing for him right now is making sure Hermione understands how upset he is with her.



As in his other lessons, Lupin walks Harry through the process in a way that builds on previous knowledge and, most importantly, he chooses to work with a boggart since it'll save Harry from most of the danger posed by real dementors. This shows that he understands how to both work within Dumbledore's rules and create an educational situation that offers Harry the best chance for success.



Lupin's suggestion to stop the lessons suggests that hearing from Harry that he hears his parents, old friends of Lupin's, is hard for Lupin as well as Harry. When Harry learns that his father and Lupin were friends, he's able to connect with Lupin on a more personal level and deepen their relationship further.



Lupin's suspicion indicates that he might guess Harry knows more about Sirius Black than Harry has let on. When Lupin says he didn't know Black as well as he thought he did, it indicates that when Black betrayed Lily and James, it came as a shock to everyone. Lupin's unwillingness to truly level with Harry, however, indicates that he's not sure if it's his place to give Harry this truth.



After the Quidditch match between Ravenclaw and Slytherin, Oliver increases practice to five days per week. This leaves Harry one night a week to do homework, though he still doesn't look as tired as Hermione does. One evening, Ron quietly asks Harry how Hermione is getting all her work done—it seems impossible that she's making it to all her classes, but she hasn't missed one. Oliver interrupts to say that he's spoken to McGonagall about the Firebolt, and that she took great offense when he asked if Harry could have it back. He suggests Harry order a new broom.

McGonagall continues to refuse to give Harry the Firebolt. To make things worse, the [dementor](#) lessons with Lupin stall and Harry's Patronus never gets distinct. After four weeks, Lupin tells Harry that for his age, his indistinct Patronus is huge. He pulls out butterbeer as a treat for Harry, assuming Harry has never had it. Harry tries to play along, but Lupin still looks suspicious. After a moment, Harry asks what's under a dementor's hood. Lupin says that nobody really knows, as people only see it when dementors administer the Dementor's Kiss, which sucks the soul out of a victim and leaves them an empty shell. Lupin says that Sirius Black will suffer this fate if the dementors catch him. Harry spits that Black deserves it and wants to tell Lupin about what he heard in the Three Broomsticks, but he doesn't want to admit he snuck into Hogsmeade.

On his way back upstairs, Harry runs into McGonagall and is surprised when she gives him his Firebolt. She tells him to try to win on Saturday before she walks off. Ron finds Harry in the hallway to ask if he can ride it, and Harry suggests they make up with Hermione. When they get to the portrait hole, they find Neville pleading with Sir Cadogan. Apparently, Neville wrote down the passwords for the week and lost his list. Harry gives Neville the password and as soon as they get into the common room, Gryffindors swarm to look at the Firebolt. After ten minutes, Harry and Ron finally approach Hermione. Ron offers to take the Firebolt upstairs and Harry sits with Hermione.

Harry looks at all of Hermione's books and suggests she drop a few subjects. Hermione looks scandalized and suddenly, they hear a yell from the boys' dormitory. Ron races downstairs with a bed sheet and an angry expression. There's a spot of blood on it, and he throws ginger cat hairs onto Hermione's essay.

Again, it's a step in the right direction that Harry and Ron recognize that there's something strange going on with Hermione. However, their unwillingness to dig deeper to figure out what's going on suggests that they either trust her enough to tell them the truth, that they fear her snappy reaction if they do ask, or that they're simply not curious or interested enough to investigate further.



When Harry wants to share what he learned in Hogsmeade with Lupin, it shows that he desperately craves an adult perspective on this information, preferably from an adult he trusts so much. However, his desire to not disappoint Lupin by admitting to sneaking out of school shows that Harry also wants to make sure that Lupin will continue to think highly of him. At this point, Harry believes that the only way to remain in Lupin's good graces is to pretend that he's being a model student and following all instructions.



McGonagall's request that Harry do his best to win shows that she's not entirely impartial when it comes to her students, but she keeps her moments of impartiality to a venue where it's entirely appropriate—Quidditch, where the whole point is for one House to win and the others to lose. This again shows that McGonagall is a far superior teacher to Snape, who plays favorites all the time and not just in appropriate instances.



Harry's suggestion shows that he cares deeply for Hermione and sees that what she's doing is having negative effects on her mental health. With this, he's able to show that he's growing up and becoming more empathetic.



CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Ron and Hermione are so angry with each other over what looks to Ron like Crookshanks' success in eating Scabbers that Harry fears this is the end of their friendship. Harry thinks that Ron is right and Crookshanks did eat Scabbers, but Hermione loses her temper with Harry when he points this out. Fred and George fail to cheer Ron up, but Harry is able to convince him to come with him to Quidditch practice so he can ride the Firebolt. At the pitch, Madam Hooch inspects the broomstick until Oliver reminds her that they need to practice. Before they mount, Oliver says that the Ravenclaw Seeker will be Cho Chang, who's very good but rides an old broom.

Ron takes his turn on the broom and flies until Madam Hooch wakes up from her nap and insists they go inside. Harry and Ron are halfway to the castle when Harry notices a pair of glittering eyes in the darkness. Ron lights his wand and they see Crookshanks. Ron angrily throws a stone, but Crookshanks disappears. Harry is secretly relieved; he thought the eyes belonged to the Grim.

The next morning, Harry takes the Firebolt to breakfast with him. The Slytherins look awestruck and even Cedric Diggory compliments Harry on the broom. After Penelope Clearwater looks at the Firebolt and heads back to her table, Percy urgently whispers to Harry that Gryffindor has to win—he and Penelope bet ten Galleons on the game, and he doesn't have the money to lose. Malfoy tries to taunt Harry about the Firebolt having a parachute, but the Gryffindors turn him away.

Cho Chang is the only girl on the Ravenclaw team and as Harry approaches, he feels his stomach drop. Madam Hooch instructs the teams to mount and kick off. Lee Jordan's commentary focuses mostly on the Firebolt and its qualities, though McGonagall tries to keep him on track. Cho tails Harry and, as he dives for the Snitch, she cuts him off. Harry leads Cho around the pitch at a quick pace and finally sees the Snitch. As he races for it, Cho screams and points to three **dementors** on the field. Harry pulls his wand out, shouts "Expecto Patronum," and continues towards the Snitch as something leaps out of his wand. He catches the Snitch and Gryffindor wins.

The team descends upon Harry and then the crowd engulfs them. Harry hears Lupin beside him complimenting him on his Patronus. When Harry says he didn't feel anything, Lupin explains that the **dementors** weren't real and leads him to where Malfoy, Crabbe, Goyle, and the Slytherin Quidditch captain are struggling to crawl out of black robes. McGonagall shouts at them as Ron laughs.

Notice that the narrator never says that Harry was particularly angry with Hermione about Scabbers's death; he was able to treat what seemed to have happened as fact without getting emotional about it. This is a mark of maturity for Harry, though his inability to see how that could be a sensitive subject for Hermione indicates that he still has a long way to go.



Harry's fear of the Grim shows that even if he finds Divination a bit ridiculous, he does take the Grim very seriously. While Crookshanks is still a disliked figure at this point, he's not scary like a death omen and is rather a sign that things are normal and safe.



Again, when Cedric Diggory congratulates Harry on the broom, it shows that he believes entirely in fairness and making sure that things play out in a just way. Percy's request to Harry shows that he also has a habit of bending the truth to make himself look better to Penelope, which begins to normalize the practice.



The fact that something "leaps" out of Harry's wand suggests that he created a real, distinct Patronus this time. It's important to remember that this happened during a moment of great excitement for Harry, which shows that Lupin may have undersold how happy or excited a person needs to be in order to properly conjure a Patronus. In this situation, being so close to the Snitch gives Harry the strength to focus on the task at hand.



Even though these dementors weren't real, Harry still gets the valuable experience of having created a perfect Patronus under pressure. This suggests that there are times when the facts of a situation aren't as important as its outcome.



Fred and George begin a party in the Gryffindor common room. Hermione, however, doesn't join in. Though she says she came to the match, she insists that Ron doesn't want her to join the party. Ron loudly comments that Scabbers used to love party food, which sends Hermione into tears. Ron tells Harry that if Hermione would act sorry, he'd stop.

The party ends after midnight when McGonagall tells everyone to go to bed. A scream interrupts Harry's dream, so he sits up, opens his curtains, and sees Ron looking terrified. Ron says that Sirius Black was above him with a knife. Doors start to open and people tell Ron that he was just dreaming. McGonagall returns to the common room, annoyed. Ron finally shouts that Sirius Black was in the dormitory and tells McGonagall to ask Sir Cadogan if he let Black in. Suspiciously, McGonagall steps out of the portrait hole and Sir Cadogan brightly says that Black had a list of passwords. McGonagall angrily asks who wrote the list and Neville raises his hand.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

The next day, Harry sees teachers putting security measures in place. McGonagall fires Sir Cadogan and the Fat Lady returns with security trolls to guard her. Harry notices that the statue of the witch that leads to Hogsmeade remains unguarded, but Ron insists that Sirius Black can't be getting in through Honeydukes. Ron becomes a celebrity overnight, though he doesn't understand why Black ran instead of murdering the entire dormitory. Neville is disgraced and McGonagall forbids anyone to give him the passwords. He also receives a Howler from his grandmother one morning.

As Harry watches Neville run away with the Howler, Hedwig nips him so he'll take her letter. It's from Hagrid inviting him and Ron to come for tea in the evening. Ron is excited to get to tell Hagrid about his heroism, but Hagrid is uninterested. In Hagrid's cabin, they notice Buckbeak on the bed with Hagrid's awful brown suit, all ready for Buckbeak's hearing in front of the Committee for the Disposal of Dangerous Creatures. Harry feels guilty; he forgot about the trial.

Hagrid looks uncharacteristically serious as he says that they need to talk about Hermione. He says that she's been visiting him often to help with Buckbeak's case, though she often cries because she has so much on her plate and Ron is ignoring her. Hagrid says that he thought Harry and Ron would value friendship more than objects. Ron angrily says that he'd speak to Hermione if she got rid of Crookshanks, and then the conversation turns to Quidditch.

When Ron refuses to forgive Hermione and, in particular, when he makes comments like this designed to make her feel bad, he looks mean and immature. At this point, he's entirely blind to what friendship should mean to him.



When people try to discredit Ron and don't take him seriously, it shows how a large group of people is capable of not being willing to hear the truth—even when, as is the case with the Gryffindors, they all care about Ron and want him to be safe. Ron's ability to bring in Sir Cadogan to corroborate his story reinforces the importance of having witnesses and other people to confirm events, as it's the only way that people are willing to take him seriously.



Again, Ron is still correct that Sirius Black isn't using that particular tunnel, but that doesn't mean that the tunnel isn't still a liability—especially since it's implied throughout the novel that not all the teachers know about the tunnel, which means that the students might not be as safe as the staff would like to think they are.



When Harry realizes that he's let Hagrid and Buckbeak down in regards to the trial, it shows him understanding that a true friend doesn't forget this sort of thing. By recognizing this, Harry will be able to use the shame he feels here to change his behavior going forward and, hopefully, be a better friend.



With this, Hagrid is able to use his role as a friend, a mentor, and a teacher to give the boys the hard-hitting talk they need to hear about friendship. By encouraging them to put Hermione first, he gives them a boot towards adulthood, maturity, and in Ron's case especially, forgiveness.



When Harry and Ron return to the castle, they see that a Hogsmeade trip is scheduled for next weekend. Harry quietly says that the passage isn't blocked up yet, but Hermione appears behind them and threatens to tell McGonagall about the Marauder's Map if he goes to Hogsmeade again. Ron tells Hermione to leave it alone and Hermione leaves when Crookshanks jumps into her lap. Harry agrees to go with the Invisibility Cloak.

Harry goes to breakfast with everyone else on Saturday morning, the Invisibility Cloak and the map in his pockets. After everyone else leaves, he heads for the third floor and checks the map by the witch statue. He sees Neville coming and can't get himself through the passage before Neville appears. Neville invites Harry to play a game and work on their essays for Lupin, but Snape interrupts. His eyes flick to the witch statue as he sends both boys back to Gryffindor Tower. Harry ditches Neville at the portrait hole and then races back to the witch statue and climbs in.

In Hogsmeade, Harry finds Ron. They decide to visit the Shrieking Shack, one of the most severely haunted buildings in Britain. Suddenly, they hear voices and see Malfoy, Crabbe, and Goyle approaching. Malfoy is talking about Buckbeak's hearing and when he sees Ron, he teases him that the Shrieking Shack would be more luxurious than the Weasleys' house. Harry sneaks behind Malfoy and throws mud at him. Ron, laughing, remarks on how haunted the Shrieking Shack is. Harry throws more mud at Crabbe and Goyle and Crabbe runs at Harry. Harry sticks out his leg to trip Crabbe, but Crabbe's foot tugs the cloak off of Harry's face. Malfoy screams and runs.

Harry races back to Honeydukes and hopes that nobody will believe Malfoy. He decides to leave the cloak in the tunnel and just as he closes up the passage, Snape appears. Harry guiltily sticks his muddy hands in his pockets and follows Snape to his office. Snape tells Harry that Malfoy saw him in Hogsmeade. Harry tries not to blink and suggests that Malfoy was hallucinating, but Snape won't have it and Harry is forced to admit that nobody can confirm that he was in Gryffindor Tower.

Snape says that even though everyone is trying to keep him safe, Harry doesn't care about consequences. He says that Harry is just like James and that James didn't care about rules either. Harry snaps, tells Snape to shut up, and says that Dumbledore shared that his dad saved Snape's life. Snape asks if Harry knows the details. Harry doesn't, so Snape says that James and his friends played a joke on him that could've killed him; James was saving himself from punishment by "saving" Snape.

To Harry and Ron, Hermione's threat appears mean, but to the reader (and to any adult who might learn of the map), Hermione is fully justified and doing the right thing by making this threat. She cares for Harry's safety and knows that he's not taking it seriously. Therefore, as his friend, it falls to her.



When Snape's eyes flick to the statue, it suggests that he's aware that the statue protects a tunnel leading out of school. This makes him a dangerous enemy for Harry should things go wrong, as Snape then has more proof that Harry is misbehaving and disregarding adults' attempts to keep him safe.



Out in Hogsmeade and away from teachers, Malfoy feels free to bully Ron mercilessly—there's nobody to stop him from being a jerk and while he's "alone," Ron is defenseless. While this does show that Malfoy is very tuned into the social structures around him and knows how to play them to his advantage, it also indicates that he's aware of his lack of power—unlike Snape, Malfoy can't torment Ron or Harry openly, as he doesn't have the prestige afforded to teachers.



In this situation, Harry is in especially deep trouble since Snape hates him so much. Because of this, Snape doesn't need to find much proof to feel justified in punishing Harry, and Snape will believe Malfoy before he listens to anything Harry has to say. This shows that even within Hogwarts, justice doesn't always function fairly.



While Snape tells Harry these things about James specifically to provoke Harry, it's worth noting that Snape has a point: Harry isn't taking Sirius Black seriously, and he's disrespecting every adult who's trying to keep him safe by breaking their rules. However, because these words come from Snape's mouth, Harry is less likely to believe him.



Snape asks Harry to empty his pockets. Harry pulls out his shopping bag from Zonko's and the Marauder's Map. He tells Snape that Ron gave him the Zonko's items as Snape picks up the parchment and starts to throw it in the fire. When Harry jumps, Snape hits the map with his wand and tells it to reveal its secrets. Words appear on the map, all insulting Snape's appearance. Snape summons Lupin through the fireplace and Lupin climbs out. He inspects the map and says it likely came from Zonko's, but Snape says it must have come from "the manufacturers." Lupin asks Harry if he knows Moony, Wormtail, Padfoot, or Prongs, and Harry truthfully says he doesn't. Ron bursts in, out of breath, and says he gave Harry the Zonko's products a while ago.

Snape's suspicion of the map and his mention that Harry got it from the manufacturers again suggests that Snape has information that Harry doesn't. When Lupin gives Harry the opportunity to tell the truth, he helps Harry's case by giving him at least one shred of truth to hang onto. Then, when Ron insists he gave Harry the Zonko's products, it indicates that Lupin is actively helping Harry and saving him from Snape's ire—there's no way he could've known that Snape was the professor to intercept Harry without help, as all professors are dedicated to keeping Harry safe and in the castle at this point.



Lupin cheerfully takes back the map and tells Harry and Ron to follow him. In the entrance hall, Lupin says he knows that the parchment is a map and is aghast that Harry didn't turn it in. Harry asks why Snape thinks he got it from the manufacturers. Lupin hesitantly explains that they would've found it entertaining to lure Harry out of school and admits that he's met them. He says that he won't cover for Harry again and says that Harry is doing a poor job of repaying Lily and James's sacrifice. Harry feels awful. As Harry and Ron reach the corridor for the portrait hole, they see Hermione coming towards them. Ron meanly asks if she told on them, but she shakily says that Hagrid lost and Buckbeak will be executed.

While Lupin says much the same thing that Snape did by bringing up all the people who have tried to keep Harry safe, it has more of an effect coming from him since Harry trusts and likes him. This shows how good teachers have a great deal of power, even when they reprimand students—their disappointment carries more weight, as Harry desperately wants to impress Lupin and be worthy of his respect. The effect of Lupin's words suggests that Harry will take them to heart going forward.



CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Hermione offers Harry the note from Hagrid. It's spotted with tears and reads that Buckbeak's execution date hasn't been decided yet. Hermione says that Lucius Malfoy scared the Committee into it, and Ron promises to help with Buckbeak's appeal. At this, Hermione throws her arms around Ron's neck and apologizes about Scabbers.

It's telling that Ron and Hermione make up after they're forced into shifting their attention to another of their friends. This shows that friendship, in all forms, can be used to encourage other friends to make up and think better of each other.



Harry, Ron, and Hermione can only talk to Hagrid during Care of Magical Creatures, as security measures don't allow them out of the castle in the evenings. One day after class, Hagrid cries. As the trio walks up to the castle, they see Malfoy, Crabbe, and Goyle inside the castle doors, laughing at Hagrid. Hermione slaps Malfoy across the face and berates him. Terrified, Malfoy runs, and Hermione tells Harry that Gryffindor has to win the Quidditch final against Slytherin. They head to Charms but as Ron and Harry arrive, they realize that Hermione is gone. She doesn't turn up all class and misses the lesson on Cheering Charms.

Hermione's absence for Cheering Charms suggests that the responsibility of having to remember her schedule and move back and forth through time is starting to negatively affect her life. Especially when her compromised mental health seems to instigate her hitting Malfoy, it suggests that there are major consequences to using time travel for personal gain.



After lunch, Harry and Ron find Hermione asleep on an Arithmancy book in the common room. She's distraught when she realizes she "forgot" to go to Charms, and Ron tells her that she's doing too much. A bit later she joins the boys for Divination and they sit at a table around a crystal ball. Trelawney greets the class and says that "the fates have informed her" that they need to start crystal balls early, since they'll be on the exam. Hermione snorts that Trelawney writes the exam, but Trelawney ignores her.

As Harry, Ron, and Hermione look at their ball, Hermione hisses that she'd be better off using this time to learn Cheering Charms. Ron jokes that the foggy crystal ball means that there's going to be fog tonight, which makes Harry and Hermione laugh. Trelawney reprimands them and then sits down at their table and breathily says that she sees the Grim in Harry's ball. When Hermione deems this ridiculous, Trelawney angrily tells Hermione that her mind is "hopelessly mundane." Hermione packs up her things and leaves. Lavender reminds Trelawney that she predicted someone would leave around Easter.

The Easter holidays are barely a holiday with everyone's exam preparations. Ron works on Buckbeak's appeal in his spare time, while Harry has Quidditch practice every evening. Oliver reminds Harry constantly that in the coming match against Slytherin, he can't catch the Snitch unless Gryffindor is ahead by at least 50 points.

Harry has several bad dreams two nights before the match and finally wakes up before dawn. He goes to the window and sees Crookshanks on the lawn with the huge black dog. Harry tries to wake Ron and wonders if the dog is actually an omen if Crookshanks can also see it.

The morning of the match, Ravenclaws and Hufflepuffs wish Harry good luck. The Gryffindor team steps onto the field. Madam Hooch sends the players off and the game immediately turns dirty. Slytherins crash into Gryffindor players, and Fred throws his Beater's club at a Slytherin player. Madam Hooch awards a number of penalties and Gryffindor's lead grows. Harry sees the Snitch and races for it, but Malfoy grabs the Firebolt's tail and slows Harry down. Several Slytherin players converge on Angelina, so Harry flies at them and scatters them all. However, when he turns his attention back to Malfoy, he sees that Malfoy is diving for the Snitch. Harry chases him, knocks Malfoy's arm aside, and catches the Snitch. The Gryffindor supporters scream, and Gryffindor wins the Quidditch Cup.

Because Hermione is able to manipulate time herself, she doesn't take Trelawney's predictions at all seriously. Hermione has the privilege of seeing how multiple things play out because she actually is in multiple places at once, and the fact that she takes time travel so seriously makes it seem as though Trelawney's frivolous predictions aren't worth her time.



Though in some ways, Trelawney is doing Hermione a favor by basically encouraging her to drop the class—Hermione clearly doesn't like it and finds it a waste of time—it's also worth noting that saying things like this to students isn't entirely appropriate. This moment begins to shift Trelawney more in the direction of Professor Snape and his outright favoritism.



Ron's choice to take over research for Buckbeak's appeal shows that now that he understands his friendships with Hermione and Hagrid are more important than anything else, he can show them this by putting in the work and following through on his promises.



Seeing Crookshanks with the dog suggests that the dog is real—it's not just a vision. In this way, Crookshanks starts to act as a voice of reason and as a test for what Harry should take seriously or not.



The fact that both Gryffindor and Slytherin players play dirty during this game shows that though the Gryffindors are cast as the "good guys" throughout the series, they're not above meeting the Slytherins at their level. In other words, the tenor of this match humanizes both teams and shows that they all just want to win the Cup. Madam Hooch's penalties are an attempt to create a sense of justice and fairness for a game that, to an outside observer, looks as though it isn't fair at all.



CHAPTER SIXTEEN

As June arrives, most of the students want nothing more than to enjoy the sunshine. However, with exams approaching, nobody has that luxury. Harry and Ron notice Hermione's exam schedule and can't help but ask how she expects to sit two exams at once, but Hermione won't say. She looks up as Hedwig flies through the window with a note from Hagrid. It says that Buckbeak's appeal will be on the last day of exams, at Hogwarts, and an executioner will attend. Ron shouts that they can't decide to kill Buckbeak without a fair appeal, but Harry suspects that Lucius Malfoy had a hand in this, especially given that Malfoy has started making comments about Buckbeak's impending death.

As exam week begins, the third-years take their Transfiguration and Charms exams, then Care of Magical Creatures, Potions, and Astronomy. Hagrid's exam involves keeping flobberworms alive for an hour, which is easy and gives Harry, Ron, and Hermione a chance to talk to Hagrid. Potions is a disaster. Harry's potion refuses to cooperate and he thinks he sees Snape mark a zero on his notes. For History of Magic, Harry writes everything he remembers about [witch hunts](#).

Lupin's exam is their second to last, and it entails an outdoor obstacle course that asks students to tackle the creatures they learned about. Harry receives full marks, Ron slips up with the hinkypunk, and Hermione does well until she gets to the boggart. She bursts out of the trunk screaming—her boggart was McGonagall, telling her that she'd failed everything.

Harry, Ron, and Hermione run into Fudge at the front doors. Fudge greets Harry warmly and explains he's here to witness a hippogriff's execution and to check on the Sirius Black situation. Ron interrupts and asks if the appeal has already happened. It hasn't, but Fudge looks confused. Two men step out of the castle to join him. One is old and the other carries an axe. Hermione stops Ron from saying more until they're in the Great Hall, when she tells Ron that Mr. Weasley's job could be in danger if Ron is rude to Fudge.

Hermione's refusal to tell the boys that she's traveling through time shows how seriously she takes the rules told to her about time travel. This helps to create the sense that Hermione still relies heavily on rules and doesn't believe in questioning them, let alone breaking them. In her case, this is a mark of immaturity and represents a lack of critical thinking skills, as at this point, she still believes books hold absolute truth and rules are all for good.



Though Harry does admit that he doesn't perform well for his Potions exam, it's unclear if he actually did poorly enough to warrant a zero. This offers the possibility that Snape is failing Harry on purpose because he doesn't like him, which again shows that Snape is a poor teacher. Further, it's also possible that Snape's exam was beyond his students' abilities, given that he doesn't teach them well anyway.



Unlike Snape's exam, Lupin's is designed in such a way as to allow students to be successful. With this, he gives his students confidence in their abilities to perform what they've learned this year, as the creatures they can now tackle will show up throughout their lives.



Even if Harry, Ron, and Hermione don't want to respect the Ministry of Magic at this point given what's happening with Buckbeak, Hermione recognizes that they at least have to look like they do. This shows that she understands that the Ministry does have real power even though, in this case, they're using it in the wrong place.



After lunch, Harry and Ron head for Trelawney's tower while Hermione leaves for Muggle Studies. The boys find the class sitting on the landing; Trelawney is seeing everyone individually. Nobody will say how the exam went when they emerge. Harry goes last. Trelawney asks him to look into the crystal ball and he decides to make something up. He says he sees a hippogriff flying away. As Harry gets up to leave, Trelawney goes rigid and speaks in a strange voice. She says that tonight, Voldemort's servant will rejoin him. Her head drops and then suddenly, she seems back to normal. She seems shocked when Harry tells her what she just said.

As Harry heads for Gryffindor Tower, he wonders if Trelawney made an actual prediction. In the common room, he finds Ron and Hermione to tell them but stops when they give him Hagrid's note—Buckbeak lost, and he tells them not to visit. Harry laments that they could go if they had the Invisibility Cloak, but they're not allowed out in the halls. Hermione perks up at this, asks how to open the passage in the stone witch, and runs off. She returns with the cloak fifteen minutes later.

After dinner, Harry, Ron, and Hermione don the Invisibility Cloak and walk down to Hagrid's. He lets them in and tells them they shouldn't have come. As Hagrid makes tea, he drops a milk jug and it shatters. Hermione takes over for Hagrid and Hagrid explains that Dumbledore can't do anything, but he'll sit with Hagrid during the execution. Hermione offers to stay, but Hagrid insists they go back to the castle. As Hermione begins to pour milk into a new jug, she shrieks. Scabbers is in the jug.

Ron, shocked, grabs Scabbers. The rat looks awful and struggles desperately. Suddenly, Hagrid sees the execution party coming to his hut and he ushers Harry, Ron, and Hermione out his back door. Harry sees Buckbeak in the garden and Hagrid tells the trio to leave before the execution happens. They try to hurry up the lawn, but Scabbers makes it difficult by biting Ron and flailing. They hear men's voices and begin to walk again, Scabbers still squeaking. Hermione sways in disbelief as they hear the axe fall.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

Harry, Ron, and Hermione stand in shock for a moment. When they hear Hagrid howl, Harry turns to head back for him, but Ron stops him and leads them all towards the castle. Darkness starts to fall around them and Scabbers continues to struggle. Harry notices Crookshanks stalking them. With a final twist, Scabbers breaks free and races away. Crookshanks chases Scabbers, and Ron throws off the cloak to chase Crookshanks. Harry and Hermione follow until they trip over Ron on the ground, Scabbers safely in his pocket.

It's worth noting that Trelawney's prediction has multiple interpretations. For someone who believes that Black is Voldemort's servant the prediction makes sense, while it also holds true if Pettigrew is the servant. To make all of this even more ironic, Harry's made-up prediction does come true. This continues to discredit Divination as Trelawney is teaching it, while also suggesting that Harry can rely on positive thinking as much as anything else.



Hermione's willingness to break rules and fetch the Invisibility Cloak shows that she's becoming more willing to behave out of character as her experiences of time travel continue to take a toll on her. This suggests that time travel, when used in this way, can fundamentally affect a person's personality.



What Hagrid says about Dumbledore suggests that though he is Hagrid's boss, he still believes that Hagrid is deserving of friendship and care like anyone else. This shows that Dumbledore believes it's his responsibility to care for and respect his staff, not just his students.



The fact that Scabbers is struggling so much should raise suspicion, especially given that he wasn't living a life of luxury in Hagrid's milk jug. This suggests that he was hiding from someone or something, which, if Ron chooses to look and accept it, helps to discredit Scabbers's identity as a normal garden rat.



Again, Scabbers's bid for freedom suggests that, at the very least, he's done leading his cushy life as a Weasley pet. This indicates that there is more to Scabbers than Ron or the Weasleys suspected, while also opening up the possibility that Crookshanks knows what's going on with Scabbers and chases him for this reason.



Before they can get back under the Invisibility Cloak, they hear something coming and a huge black dog leaps at Harry. It knocks Harry down, grabs Ron's arm, and starts dragging him away. Suddenly, something hits Harry, and he hears Hermione shriek too. He lights his wand and sees that they're under the Whomping Willow. The dog tries to drag Ron into the tree's roots, but Ron hooks a leg around a root. Ron's leg cracks and he vanishes. Harry tries to run through the branches, but Crookshanks weaves through and puts his paw on a knot on the trunk. The tree stops moving. Harry tells Hermione that Crookshanks and the dog are friends, and all three of them climb into the tunnel after Ron.

When Harry and Hermione reach the end of the tunnel, they carefully raise their wands to see where they've ended up. They see a dusty room with smashed furniture. Hermione whispers that they're in the Shrieking Shack, and Harry notes that ghosts don't destroy furniture. They hear a creak upstairs and silently climb to a landing. They hear Crookshanks purring and a moan through a doorway and see Ron on the floor. Ron moans that it's a trap and "he" is an Animagus. The door shuts behind Harry and Hermione and they turn to see a sallow, stringy man behind them. It's Sirius Black.

Black disarms Harry and Hermione and, eyes locked on Harry, says that he knew Harry would come—Harry is just like James, and this will make everything easier. Filled with rage, Harry starts for Black but Ron and Hermione pull him back. Ron pulls himself to standing and tells Black that he'll have to kill them too if he wants to kill Harry. Black tells Ron to lie down so he doesn't hurt his leg more and says only one person will die tonight. Harry taunts Black about having gone soft in Azkaban and throws himself at Black.

Black is too surprised to fight Harry in time. The two scuffle on the floor until Hermione steps in. Crookshanks tries to keep Harry from getting his wand, but in the end, Harry and Hermione get their wands and point them at Black. Harry reminds Black that he killed Lily and James. Black doesn't deny it but says Harry doesn't know the whole story. Before Harry can say anything else, Crookshanks settles himself on Black's chest. As Harry raises his wand, they hear footsteps downstairs. Hermione screams that they're upstairs with Sirius Black.

When Crookshanks shows that he knows how to make the tree stop, it suggests that he knows more than Ron has previously given him credit for. While Harry and Hermione interpret his actions as allowing them to follow and save Ron, they later learn that he's actually leading them to Sirius Black—Ron is just an innocent victim in all of this. However, when they choose to go after Ron, it shows that they care more for his safety than their own in this case—they're acting like good friends intent on saving him.



Now that Harry is in the Shrieking Shack, he can start to put together the evidence before him that suggests that the shack isn't actually haunted—he'll need to reevaluate everything he knows about the shack with this new evidence. When they realize that the dog is Sirius Black, it does become puzzling why he didn't kill Harry, given that that's supposedly what he's after—there's more to the story.



When Black expresses care and concern for Ron while saying that only one person will die, it offers a few clues that he's not actually after Harry or either of his friends. Harry is so filled with rage by Black's words because at this point, he still believes that Black betrayed his parents. Because of this, Harry takes Black's comparison to Harry's father like he takes Snape's similar comparisons: as an offensive insult.



Crookshanks's behavior again suggests that Harry is understanding something incorrectly when it comes to this story. Notably, Crookshanks is also acting like a good friend here by protecting Black and therefore he leads Harry by example. When Hermione screams for whoever's downstairs, it shows that she still trusts all the teachers at school to care for her and take her concerns seriously.



Lupin bursts through the door, takes in the scene, and disarms Harry and Hermione. Then, he asks Black where "he" is. Black points at Ron and Lupin, confused, mutters that "he hasn't shown himself" and asks if they "switched" without telling him. Black nods, Lupin helps him up, and the two embrace. Hermione screams wildly that she's been covering for Lupin and Harry, furious, shouts that he trusted Lupin. Lupin asks to explain, but Hermione tells Harry to not trust Lupin, as he's been helping Black, wants Harry dead, and is a werewolf. Calmly, Lupin says that Hermione is only right on one count: he is a werewolf.

Ron whimpers and Lupin starts towards him, but Ron gasps for Lupin to get away from him. Hermione says that she figured it out after Snape assigned the werewolf essay. Lupin tells Hermione she's clever and says that the entire staff knows; her telling anyone wouldn't have done anything. Harry yells again that Lupin has been helping Black. Exasperated, Lupin throws Harry, Ron, and Hermione their wands and asks them to listen. He says that he was looking at the Marauder's Map, which he knows how to use because he helped write it, because he suspected that the trio would visit Hagrid.

Lupin says that when Harry, Ron, and Hermione left Hagrid's, he saw that a fourth person was with them. He watched Sirius pull two people into the Whomping Willow. Ron insists that it was just him, and then Lupin asks to look at Scabbers. Hesitantly, Ron pulls Scabbers out of his robes. Black says that Scabbers isn't a rat; he's an Animagus named Peter Pettigrew.

It's telling that everything Lupin says to Black makes little sense to Harry, Ron, and Hermione. This makes it abundantly clear that they don't have the whole story. When Lupin tells Hermione that she hasn't fully understood everything, it shows that Hermione's cleverness isn't infallible and, without proper information, even she can come to incorrect conclusions. Harry's sense of betrayal shows how much he trusted Lupin.



Lupin's admission that the staff knows about him being a werewolf reminds the teenagers that they're not experts and, because they're still children to many, they're not privy to everything that goes on at the school. By giving the trio their wands back, Lupin shows them that he'll now treat them like adults and tell them the truth, as long as they act like adults and listen.



This new information changes everything that the trio knows about Sirius Black and the reason he's in Azkaban. If Lupin is correct, this means that they'll need to entirely rethink what they believe is true and, most importantly, begin to treat the Ministry with caution.



CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

After a moment of silence Ron says that Black and Lupin are crazy, and Harry points out that Black killed Peter Pettigrew twelve years ago. Black lunges for Scabbers, but Lupin holds him back and insists that Harry, Ron, and Hermione need to understand and have a right to know. Finally, Black stops struggling and agrees. Ron pulls himself up to leave but Lupin insists he stay and hold onto Peter. Black says that people didn't see what they thought they saw on the day that Peter "died."

Holding Black back and insisting that the trio needs to fully understand what's going on again shows that Lupin believes they're fully capable of handling this information like adults. He also recognizes that, if they don't get the full story, they'll never have a reason to question what they already believe.



In a trembling voice, Hermione says that Pettigrew can't be an Animagus because the Ministry keeps a register and would've known. Lupin laughs and tells Hermione that she's right, but there were once three unregistered Animagi at Hogwarts. He breaks off suddenly as the door opens. There's nobody there. Ron says that the shack is haunted, but Lupin says that the screams that used to come from it were his. He explains that he was bitten as a small boy and back then, the Wolfsbane Potion didn't exist. Dumbledore allowed Lupin to attend school and built the tunnel and the Shrieking Shack to keep people safe while he transformed. Dumbledore encouraged the rumors that the Shack was haunted.

Lupin says that his transformations were awful, but he had three friends—Sirius Black, Peter Pettigrew, and James Potter—all of whom eventually figured out where he went every month. Instead of deserting him, they spent three years figuring out how to become Animagi. They completed it in their fifth year and as animals, they could keep Lupin company since animals aren't in any danger around a werewolf. Because Sirius and James were such large animals, they could also keep Lupin in check and so they wandered the school grounds and around Hogsmeade. These explorations eventually culminated in the Marauder's Map.

Hermione interjects that what they did was extremely dangerous. Lupin heavily says she's right; there were several times when he nearly bit someone. He feels extremely guilty now, as he's been inadvertently helping Sirius all along. He says that he never told Dumbledore that Sirius was an Animagus, as that would mean admitting that he betrayed Dumbledore's trust as a boy. This is why Snape has been so nasty to him. Black is surprised to learn that Snape is a teacher, and Lupin explains that once, Sirius told Snape how to get into the Whomping Willow. James learned what happened and saved Snape, but Snape did see Lupin as a werewolf. Harry asks if Snape is upset now because he thought Lupin was in on the joke, and Snape himself emerges from under the Invisibility Cloak and affirms this.

Again, Hermione's insistence that there aren't unregistered Animagi shows that at this point, she still believes that the Ministry holds the absolute truth. As she learns that this isn't the case, she'll begin to come of age and learn to think more critically about things that are presented to her as fact. The same goes for the rumors surrounding the Shrieking Shack—in this case, while wrong, the rumors kept Lupin safe and kept people from investigating further.



What Sirius, Peter, and James did for Lupin was the ultimate act of friendship and sacrifice, as they made the worst times of his life into the best. This showed Lupin the power of friendship and impressed upon him that his friends would always be there for him. Though it's unclear exactly where Lupin has been for the last twelve years, his appearance also suggests that those years might have been easier with friends.



When Lupin is able to look back on the happiest time of his life and admit that it was also stupid and dangerous to have done that, it shows that while it doesn't compromise the great sacrifice that Lupin's friends made, it is possible to grow up and think critically about who he was as a young man. When the truth about the trick the group played on Snape comes out, it becomes clear that even though Black is beginning to shift to being a "good guy," he does have a dangerous mean streak that affects whether or not people will trust him.



CHAPTER NINETEEN

Hermione screams as Snape thanks Harry for the Invisibility Cloak. He explains that he took a goblet of the Wolfsbane Potion to Lupin's office, where he found the Marauder's Map. Snape says that it's evidence that Lupin has been helping Black into the castle, and refuses to listen to Lupin trying to explain. He binds Lupin and threatens to kill Black. Nervously, Hermione asks Snape to listen to Lupin, but Snape reminds her that she's already in trouble and then shouts at her to be quiet. Black snarls that if Ron brings Scabbers to the castle nobody will go to Azkaban. Snape threatens to call the [dementors](#) and Harry notices a crazy glint in Snape's eye.

Harry points out that Lupin could've killed him many times over the school year. When Snape refuses to listen, Harry yells that he's pathetic for holding onto a silly grudge. Snape insults Harry and James, then tells Harry to get out of the way. At the same time, Harry, Ron, and Hermione all disarm Snape, which sends him flying back into the wall and knocks him out. Hermione whimpers as Black unties Lupin.

Lupin tells Harry that it's time to provide proof that his story is true. Black asks for Peter, but Ron weakly asks how Black is sure that Scabbers is Peter. Black pulls out the newspaper clipping of the Weasleys in Egypt, with Scabbers on Ron's shoulder. He explains that Fudge gave him his paper last summer, and Lupin notices that Scabbers is missing a toe. He asks if Peter cut off his finger himself before he transformed. Black affirms this and says that when he cornered Peter on the street, Peter yelled that Black betrayed Lily and James, blew up the street, and ran away with the other rats. Ron won't have it; he insists Scabbers lost the toe in a fight and is so old because his family takes good care of him.

Lupin notes that Scabbers looks awful now, and he and Ron argue about whether Scabbers's health started going downhill after Sirius escaped or after Crookshanks came on the scene. Black says that Crookshanks is a smart creature and has been trying to bring Peter to him, and he stole the list of passwords to get into Gryffindor Tower. Harry thinks this is all absurd as Black says that Peter faked his death by leaving blood on Ron's sheets. This jolts Harry to his senses and he shouts that Black was going to kill Pettigrew like he killed Lily and James. Black agrees that he wants to kill Pettigrew, but Lupin says that Harry has it wrong: Peter betrayed his parents. Harry yells that this isn't true; Black admitted he was the Potters' Secret Keeper.

Given what Snape knows and how he feels about Lupin and Black, he's able to come to his own conclusions about what's going on here. Notice how Snape screams at Hermione, which stands in sharp contrast to how Lupin handled Hermione's questions. This shows that, especially in intense and emotional moments like this, Snape isn't a teacher that the trio can trust to actually listen to them or think of what's best for them—he's more concerned with his own grudges.



In particular, Hermione's choice to disarm Snape shows that she's learning to think more critically about the systems of power around her and understand that they're not always good or to be trusted.



Black's version of events shows that Pettigrew was a master manipulator and fully understood how the Ministry was operating twelve years ago. He knew that because he's an unregistered Animagus, he had an easy escape route and could therefore not ever be around to give any credence to Black's story. This also suggests that Pettigrew understood that Black wasn't going to be given a trial and would therefore have no chance to even try to prove his innocence.



Because things still don't add up for Harry, he continues to focus his anger on Sirius Black and doesn't yet understand that he doesn't have the whole story. Lupin's presence in this situation likely helps Harry choose to see that Lupin and Black are right, given that Harry already trusts Lupin and seems more willing to continue to do so since Lupin gave back Harry's wand. It's worth noting, however, that Black isn't helping his case by admitting he wants to kill Pettigrew, as that only increases Harry's belief that he's a murderer.



Black says that in a way, he did kill Lily and James: he persuaded them to make Peter their Secret Keeper, not knowing Peter was working with Voldemort. Lupin cuts him off and says that they can prove this by making Peter show himself. He assures Ron that if Scabbers is really just a rat, it won't hurt him, and Ron hands the rat over. As Scabbers squeaks wildly, Lupin and Black point their wands at the rat and it suddenly grows into a shrunken, rodent-like man. Eyes darting to the door, he greets his friends. Lupin casually tells Pettigrew about their chat as Pettigrew insists that Black killed the Potters and now wants to kill him. He says he knew that Sirius was going to escape from Azkaban because Sirius's dark magic is so strong.

Black laughs at the thought of Voldemort teaching him tricks, notices that Pettigrew flinches, and says that Pettigrew has been hiding from Voldemort's supporters, not from him. He suggests they'll be displeased to learn that Pettigrew is alive, and Lupin asks why an innocent man would spend twelve years as a rat. Pettigrew tries to insist that he was just scared of Black, whom he refers to as a spy, but Black growls that Pettigrew has spent his life sucking up to powerful people and he should've seen from the start that Pettigrew was the spy. Harry notices that Pettigrew's face is pale.

Timidly, Hermione asks why Pettigrew hasn't tried to kill Harry already, since he's been sleeping in the same room for years. Black says that Pettigrew doesn't do anything unless there's something in it for him. With Voldemort gone, there's no incentive. Hermione politely asks Black how he got out of Azkaban *without* dark magic. Black says that the knowledge he was innocent wasn't exactly happy, so the [dementors](#) couldn't take it. He spent time as a dog, which made his emotions less complex and kept him sane. When he got the picture of Pettigrew and realized what would happen, it also wasn't a happy thought and he slipped out as a dog and swim to the mainland. He appeals once more to Harry and says he never betrayed Lily and James. Harry nods.

At this, Pettigrew falls to his knees and pleads with Black and Lupin. They decide to kill Pettigrew together, so Pettigrew turns to Ron. Ron, however, looks revolted. Pettigrew turns to Hermione and then to Harry, whom he tells that James would've shown mercy. Lupin and Black make Pettigrew confess that he gave Lily and James to Voldemort but as they point their wands at him, Harry leaps in front. Harry says that Pettigrew deserves the [dementors](#), and he doesn't think James would've wanted his friends to be killers. Lupin ties up Pettigrew, they all agree that if he tries to escape they'll kill him, and Lupin splints Ron's leg. Ron and Lupin chain themselves to Pettigrew, while Black levitates Snape's body to take him back to the castle.

Though Scabbers's transformation into an adult man is compelling information enough, Pettigrew's insistence on sticking to the story he's already told shows that he understands the importance of not budging on this matter. He likely believes that if he refuses to admit that he's lying, he still has a chance to convince Harry, Ron, and Hermione that Black is guilty and Lupin is complicit.



The fact that Harry is looking at Pettigrew's body language more than he's listening to what Pettigrew says indicates that he's beginning to shift his thinking to believe Black and Lupin's story. Lupin does have a point that Pettigrew isn't acting innocent, and hasn't acted innocent by spending the last twelve years in his rat form.



Black's assessment of how Pettigrew operates indicates that Pettigrew has a very different idea of friendship and how it works—namely, it has to give him power, not just camaraderie. Black's explanation of how he got out of Azkaban suggests that a truly innocent person cannot go crazy in Azkaban, as the truth isn't a happy thought; it's simply a fact. This again discredits the Ministry and the dementors as keepers of the peace, as it shows that they're not successful in convicting the right people or punishing them effectively.



By deciding to pardon Pettigrew, Harry momentarily steps into his dad's shoes and in some ways connects the two generations of friendships. In doing so, he also learns that as an individual, he does have the power to enact justice on a small scale where the Ministry cannot be trusted to do so. With Pettigrew alive, Black can prove his innocence—assuming the Ministry of Magic will listen, which they've not proven themselves willing to do thus far.



CHAPTER TWENTY

As the party makes its way back through the tunnel, Sirius notes that turning in Pettigrew will clear his name, and he tells Harry that he's his godfather. Awkwardly, he invites Harry live with him, and Harry leaps at the chance. Soon, they reach the opening and Crookshanks stops the Whomping Willow while everyone steps out. As they make their way towards the castle in the dark, the clouds shift. Snape's body runs into Lupin, Pettigrew, and Ron, who all stop suddenly. Lupin goes rigid and starts to shake. Sirius tells Harry and Hermione to run and then leaps at Lupin in his dog form as Lupin transforms into a werewolf.

Lupin and Sirius rip at each other violently and Harry only stops watching when Hermione screams. He sees Pettigrew grab Lupin's wand, knock out Ron and Crookshanks, and then transform and flee. As Lupin races into the forest alone, Harry yells to Sirius that Pettigrew transformed. Sirius runs off after Pettigrew. Hermione and Harry approach Ron, who's alive but seems not to recognize them. In the distance, Harry hears a dog yelping and both he and Hermione run after Sirius. They find him at the lake, back in his human form, with **dementors** closing in on him. Harry thinks of living with Sirius and starts to shout "Expecto Patronum."

Hermione joins in, but she's too afraid to be effective. She collapses as silvery wisps come out of Harry's wand. Harry collapses as well and watches a **dementor** approach and lower its hood to expose a face with only a mouth. Harry's Patronus dies as he starts to hear Lily scream. The dementor grabs Harry's neck but before it can administer the Kiss, a silver light appears and the dementor drops Harry. Harry watches an animal chase the dementors away and then sees somebody welcome the animal. He faints.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

Harry comes to in the hospital wing and listens to Snape and Fudge in the hallway. Snape tells Fudge that Harry, Hermione, and Ron were Confunded, and he suggests that Harry thinks too highly of himself and has been given too much leeway. Fudge asks about the retreating **dementors**, but Snape doesn't know why they left Harry, Hermione, and Black alone. At this, Harry opens his eyes and sees Hermione. Madam Pomfrey comes over with a block of chocolate and as Harry tries to get out of bed, she soothingly says that Black will receive the Kiss any moment. Harry's shout of surprise brings Fudge and Snape in from the hallway.

Remember that Snape was taking Lupin the Wolfsbane Potion when he discovered the Marauder's Map; Lupin isn't safe at this point. Sirius's leap towards Lupin shows that now that his group of friends is expanding to include the next generation, he understands that it's his responsibility to keep them safe, just as he once kept the residents of Hogsmeade and other Hogwarts students safe from Lupin.



Now that Harry knows the truth of what happened twelve years ago, he also feels that it's his responsibility to fight for the truth and save Sirius's life. This again shows Harry truly understanding that he needs to take justice into his own hands and, in this case, fight the ministry by taking on the swarming dementors. However, it's also important to remember what Hagrid said about the dementors: they don't care who's guilty, which suggests that Harry might be in danger.



Notice that the narration doesn't mention what the animal is or who Harry sees across the lake. This suggests that Harry will need more time to fully understand what's happened and come to an understanding of the truth. When the dementor tries to kiss Harry, it reinforces that the dementors, like the Ministry, aren't to be trusted.



While Snape is clearly angry and prejudiced, he's also not wrong—Harry does think he's above the law and he gets away with plenty of things at school. This starts to suggest that Snape, while misguided, may still be giving out nuggets of truth. However, because Harry won't listen to Snape, he'll never take anything Snape says in this regard seriously.



Harry and Hermione try to tell Fudge that Sirius is innocent and that Peter Pettigrew is an Animagus, but Madam Pomfrey shoves chocolate in Harry's mouth so he stops speaking. Dumbledore arrives and calmly asks to speak with Harry and Hermione. Snape, incensed, asks if his testimony is worthless and screams at Hermione again when she reminds him that he was knocked out and doesn't have the whole story. Dumbledore ushers everyone out of the room and as Snape leaves, he reminds Dumbledore that Sirius proved capable of murder at age sixteen.

As soon as the door closes, Harry and Hermione start to tell Dumbledore what they know, but he stops them. He reminds them that there's no proof of Sirius's innocence, and Lupin's testimony will count for little given that he's a werewolf. Dumbledore says that he believes them, but he has no power to make Fudge agree. Harry feels as though his last hope is gone as Dumbledore says that they need more time. Hermione's eyes grow round as Dumbledore tells them where to find Sirius and says that they can save two lives if things go well. He reminds Hermione of the law, says he's going to lock them in, and tells Hermione "three turns should do it."

Hermione pulls a thin gold chain with a tiny hourglass on it out of her robes, calls Harry to her, and throws it around his neck too. She turns the hourglass and things start to blur. Harry finds himself in the entrance hall with Hermione. She drags him into a broom closet and explains that they've gone back three hours in time. She listens to herself, Harry, and Ron shuffle down to Hagrid's hut under the Invisibility Cloak and explains that her necklace is a Time-Turner. McGonagall gave it to her so she could attend her classes, but she had to promise not to tell anyone.

Hermione admits she doesn't understand what Dumbledore wants them to do. They puzzle over what happened three hours ago and Harry realizes that Dumbledore wants them to save Buckbeak so that Sirius can escape on him. He and Hermione run into the forest and sneak around to Hagrid's hut. They watch Hagrid let their earlier selves in and hear Hermione find Scabbers. Harry suggests that they run in and grab Pettigrew, but Hermione tells Harry that they can't change time—people have killed their past or future selves because they think what they're seeing is dark magic.

When Hermione reminds Snape that he doesn't have the whole story, it shows that she now understands how important it is for a person to have all the information they possibly can before making any important decisions. Snape never saw Pettigrew in his human form, which does mean that he has no reason to believe Lupin and Sirius's tale.



Dumbledore's admission that he doesn't have the power to make Fudge believe their version of events forces Harry to begin to grow up and see the adults in his life as humans, not gods. He also notes that who says something is almost more important than what's said, given that Harry and Hermione aren't believable because they're teenagers and Lupin isn't believable because the wizarding world shuns werewolves.



Now that Harry knows the truth about Hermione, many earlier events start to make more sense. In particular, Harry recognizes that while he knew that there was something strange going on, he wasn't especially curious about what was going on with Hermione. This impresses on him that if he wishes to be a good friend going forward, he'll need to be more actively curious about his friends so he can care for them better.



When Hermione insists on following the rules of time travel so closely, it suggests that even though they are breaking rules (they are "changing time" by saving Buckbeak, at the very least), there are other rules that are far more important. If Harry were to change what he knows happened at this point, he might not be able to complete his tasks as everything would change.



Harry and Hermione watch Dumbledore, Fudge, Macnair, and the Committee member leave the castle, and see Hagrid escort the trio out his back door. Hagrid lets in the execution party and Harry watches Macnair look at Buckbeak out the window. Fudge explains that he has to read the execution notice and asks Macnair to listen. While Fudge is reading, Harry creeps out and bows to Buckbeak. Buckbeak bows back and Harry starts to drag him towards the forest. Hermione helps Harry drag Buckbeak behind a tree as they hear Hagrid's door open. Macnair is furious and swings his axe into the fence, but Dumbledore sounds amused. Hagrid starts sobbing with happiness.

Hermione says that now they'll need to hide until they can fly Buckbeak up to Sirius's window in a few hours. They creep around the edge of the forest until the Whomping Willow is in sight. They watch Ron fight with Scabbers and watch Sirius drag Ron through the roots. Dumbledore walks Macnair, Fudge, and the Committee member back to the castle and minutes later, Lupin lets himself into the tree. Harry suggests that he could go grab the Invisibility Cloak from where they left it, but Hermione stops him just as Hagrid starts walking up to the castle. Minutes later, Snape bursts out of the castle, grabs the Cloak, and vanishes under the tree.

As they wait, Hermione asks why the [dementors](#) didn't get Sirius. Harry explains what he saw and says that he knows someone conjured a real, powerful Patronus. Slowly and hesitantly, Harry says that it looked like James. Hermione looks worried and Harry turns away. About an hour later, Hermione and Harry watch themselves climb out of the Whomping Willow's roots. Harry grudgingly agrees that they can't go looking for Pettigrew as the cloud reveals the moon. Suddenly, Harry realizes that they have to move in order to avoid the werewolf Lupin. They race back to Hagrid's.

Harry promises not to interfere but goes back outside to keep tabs on events. He hears the [dementors](#) swarming himself, Hermione, and Sirius, and decides that he needs to see if James is going to appear. Harry hides behind a bush and watches his feeble Patronus across the lake. Nobody appears and suddenly, Harry understands that he saw himself. He steps from behind the bush and conjures a huge stag Patronus. When it returns to him, Harry whispers "Prongs." A second after it disappears, Hermione and Buckbeak appear behind him. Hermione is distraught, but Harry explains that it's okay since he didn't realize he saw himself. They watch Snape put their past selves on stretchers and take them up to the castle.

Because Harry is able to successfully bow to Buckbeak and handle the hippogriff, it suggests that at the very least Hagrid's first class was a success—he successfully taught one student to deal with hippogriffs. This offers some hope for the future that, if Hagrid is able to regain his confidence, he'll be able to become a much better Care of Magical Creatures teacher.



Again, Hermione's insistence on following the rules shows why she was given the Time-Turner in the first place: she still respects rules above all else. She also understands that she and Harry aren't just bound by the rules of time travel; they also have to follow Dumbledore's rules and do only what he asked them to do. Hermione's warning here also saves them from messing up what they know happened in the Shrieking Shack.



Harry's willingness to tell Hermione the truth about what he saw in regards to the Patronus speaks to the strength of their friendship and the trust between them. This then suggests that they've made up fully and, going forward, they will continue to move towards maturity and engage with each other more like adults than children.



When Harry realizes that he actually conjured the Patronus, he learns that there are exceptions to the rules of time travel—but that they can only look like exceptions from the time-traveler's point of view. The fact that Harry was able to mistake himself for James also speaks to the connection that Harry shares with his father, as he's finally able to see what others have been telling him for three years now (that he looks shockingly like his father).



Hermione checks her watch and when they see Macnair leave the castle, presumably to get the **dementors**, she and Harry get on Buckbeak and fly to the appropriate window. Sirius looks surprised to see them as Hermione unlocks the window. He climbs on behind them and they fly to the top of the West Tower. Harry assures Sirius that they're all going to be fine, and Harry and Hermione yell at him to go.

Successfully saving Sirius means that Hermione and Harry were able to take justice into their own hands and make it happen on a much smaller scale than the Ministry is capable of. This completes their journey towards learning that they can't trust the Ministry to do the right thing.



CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

With ten minutes to get back to the hospital wing, Harry and Hermione race through the castle. They hear Fudge and Snape walking towards the hospital wing but when they start in that direction themselves, they hear Peeves ahead. They duck into a classroom to avoid him and finally make it to the corridor and the hospital wing. They see Dumbledore step out of the door and run forward. He smiles at them and Harry tells him they did it. Once Dumbledore is sure that the other Hermione and Harry are gone from the hospital wing, he lets them back in. They climb into their beds and accept their chocolate without question.

It's worth noting that Dumbledore's willingness to send Harry and Hermione back in time to complete this task means that, like Lupin, he knows that this is an experience he can count on them to handle. This shows that, despite some of Dumbledore's questionable hires, his staff is capable of teaching students skills enough to accomplish tasks like this.



Harry hears a furious roar from somewhere above them and within a minute, they hear Snape's voice getting closer, shouting that Harry has something to do with Sirius's escape. Dumbledore looks calm as Snape tells Harry to reveal what he did, but Dumbledore asks Snape to think and reminds him that the door has been locked for the last ten minutes. Snape angrily leaves the ward and Fudge says that the Ministry will be in trouble once the news of Black and Buckbeak gets out. Fudge does say that the **dementors** will be removed from the school, as they can't be attacking students. After the adults leave, Ron moans, wakes up, and asks what happened.

Because Dumbledore sent Harry and Hermione back in time and they weren't seen, there's absolutely no evidence that they did anything under Snape's nose. This turns something that Snape used to have the upper hand on around on him, as he's no longer the one with "evidence" to support his version of events. When Fudge agrees that the dementors have to go, it indicates that at a certain point, he does recognize that the dementors have their limits.



The castle is almost deserted when Harry, Ron, and Hermione leave the hospital wing the next day. They sit by the lake and Hagrid finds them to tell them the good news about Buckbeak. Hagrid also shares that Lupin is a werewolf and just resigned. Harry runs to Lupin's office and knocks on the open door. Lupin greets him and says he saw Harry coming on the Marauder's Map. He confirms that he resigned because Snape leaked that he's a werewolf and parents will be distraught.

Now that it's public knowledge that Lupin is a werewolf, he has to deal with the consequences of this. For him, this is something normal and expected while for Harry, this kind of discrimination is new and especially painful. This then becomes another important moment in Harry's process of growing up and better understanding the world's injustice.



Lupin asks Harry to tell him about his Patronus and confirms that James's Animagus form was a stag. As he finishes packing, Lupin gives Harry the Invisibility Cloak and the Marauder's Map. Harry asks Lupin about his earlier comment that Moony, Wormtail, Padfoot, and Prongs would've wanted to lure him out of school. Lupin explains that James would've wanted Harry to find the passages out of the castle. A knock on the door interrupts them and Dumbledore arrives to tell Lupin that his carriage is ready. Lupin bids Harry goodbye, shakes Dumbledore's hand, and leaves.

Harry flops down in Lupin's chair and says that what he did didn't make any difference since Pettigrew escaped. Dumbledore quietly says that Harry saved an innocent man and discovered the truth. This jogs Harry's memory and he tells him about Trelawney's prediction. Dumbledore seems impressed, but Harry is distraught. He says that since he stopped Sirius and Lupin from killing Pettigrew, it'll be his fault if Voldemort returns. Dumbledore tells Harry that consequences are complicated and what Harry did was noble. He points out that Pettigrew is in Harry's debt now, which could come in handy later. He assures Harry that James would've saved Pettigrew.

Harry admits that he thought James conjured his Patronus across the lake. Dumbledore says that it's an easy mistake given how much Harry resembles his father, but Harry says it was a stupid mistake since he knows James is dead. Softly, Dumbledore tells Harry that he found his father inside himself through his Patronus.

Over the next few days, rumors fly about how Sirius and Buckbeak escaped. Malfoy is furious, while Percy spouts off about what he'll do once he gets a job at the Ministry. Harry, however, feels awful. His entire class is sad to see Lupin go, and he fixates on Trelawney's prediction. He also hates that he has to go back to the Dursleys, especially after believing for a minute that he could go live with Sirius. On the last day of term, the students get their exam results. Harry somehow makes it through Potions, but he suspects Dumbledore didn't allow Snape to fail him. In classes Snape seems to hate Harry even more.

Lupin's comments about James wanting Harry to learn about the school positions the Marauder's Map as a bridge between the two generations of friends. Through the map, James is able to posthumously parent his son in a way that he otherwise could not. Through the map, he can remain young and irresponsible and join Harry as Harry grows up.



Dumbledore's reply to Harry's insistence that his actions made no difference suggests that as far as Dumbledore is concerned, knowing the truth on a personal level and making sure that individuals receive justice is far more important than saving the world on a grand scale. While Pettigrew may go on to help Voldemort, the lives that Harry saved through his actions are still significant.



Again, Dumbledore is able to use his power as a trusted mentor and teacher to encourage Harry to see that there are many ways he can connect with his father, the Marauder's Map being one and his Patronus being another.



Percy's anger in particular suggests that while he and Hermione share a love of rules and regulations, he doesn't have the critical thinking skills that Hermione developed over the course of this school year and during her trips back in time. He still thinks that the Ministry is the only way for people to receive justice and for law and order to be upheld, while Hermione knows that this isn't true.



On the train back to King's Cross, Hermione tells Harry and Ron that she's handed in her Time-Turner and dropped Muggle Studies so that she can have a normal schedule next year. Ron grouses that Hermione should've told them about the Time-Turner and then invites Harry to come and stay with him over the summer so they can go to the Quidditch World Cup. Later in the afternoon, Hermione notices a tiny gray owl outside the window. Harry grabs it out of the air and takes its letter. The letter is from Sirius. He writes that he's in hiding, admits to sending the Firebolt, and apologizes for scaring Harry in his dog form. He also encloses a note for Dumbledore giving Harry permission to visit Hogsmeade and says that Ron can keep the owl. Ron holds the owl out to Crookshanks, who purrs.

Harry holds onto Sirius's letter until he arrives in King's Cross and greets Uncle Vernon. Vernon asks about the letter and refuses to sign another form, but Harry cheerfully says it's from his godfather, who's a convicted murderer and wants to know that Harry is happy. Harry feels hopeful that this will be a good summer.

Hermione's decision to hand in the Time-Turner suggests that her purely selfish use of the device isn't worth it in the long run, while using it for the greater good—like for saving Sirius and Buckbeak—is a far more appropriate use. Even if Harry didn't think what he did was significant earlier, freeing Sirius does give Harry the one thing he's wanted all year: permission to visit Hogsmeade. Though small, this shows Harry that what he did was absolutely valuable.



Even better than getting permission to go to Hogsmeade, Harry also now has something to hold over his aunt and uncle. Now Harry has information that he can use to his advantage.



HOW TO CITE

To cite this LitChart:

MLA

Brock, Zoë. "Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban." *LitCharts*. LitCharts LLC, 23 Feb 2019. Web. 18 Oct 2019.

CHICAGO MANUAL

Brock, Zoë. "Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban." *LitCharts* LLC, February 23, 2019. Retrieved October 18, 2019.
<https://www.litcharts.com/lit/harry-potter-and-the-prisoner-of-azkaban>.

To cite any of the quotes from *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* covered in the Quotes section of this LitChart:

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Rowling, J.K.. *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*. Scholastic. 2001.

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Rowling, J.K.. *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*. New York: Scholastic. 2001.